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GATHERING ARBUTUS.

BY EMMA M. CASS.

What time the fair, green-kirtled Spring
Flung her rich stores and blossomy crown
Upon the uplands, bare and brown,
When south winds 'gan their whispering,
And raced and wandered up and down

The broad, free downs, from dawn till dusk,
We stole from out the haunts of men—
Right blithesome children once again—
To scent the mountain-roses' musk,
And cull wild flowers in wood and glen.

We plucked the sweet arbutus flowers,
'Neath genial sun and tender shade—
Her lips such wondrous music made,
I said, "Such heaven-born bliss as ours,
Can never blight, dear heart, or fade!"

She vowed a tender vow that day,
This maiden—coyest of coy maids;
Where dwelt these waxen blooms—in glades
Where sunbeams scarcely e'er did play—
She, blushing, gave herself away!

DAVY CROCKETT, ON THE TRACK;

OR,

The Cave of the Counterfeiters.

BY FRANK CARROLL,

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE," "JOHN PASSMORE'S PLOT," ETC.

DAVY CROCKETT'S DISCOVERY.

"WELL, I'LL BE SHOT, IF HERE AIN'T WORK! MURDER, SURE AS [illegible] I'LL SEE [illegible]! WHO IS IT, WHIRLWIND, BOY; DO YOU KNOW HIM?"

CHAPTER IV.

NED GORDON'S STORY.

The men started on hearing this name, celebrated throughout the country as one of Tennessee's most worthy sons, the prince of hunters, whose prowess with the rifle had gained him the reputation of a Nimrod, and whose exciting encounters with wild beasts, and many hair-breadth escapes, had afforded thrilling entertainment to thousands of his countrymen. They were indeed so surprised, and their eyes so engaged with the face of the renowned hunter, that they failed to notice the hidden form revealed by his movement.

Tim Hall, noticing their pre-occupation, quietly stepped behind Crockett, picked up the cloak, and replaced it upon the table, all unnoticed by them.

The hunter stood with the easy assurance of one who, without undue vanity, is yet aware of his worth, and possessed of that commendable pride which is based upon service rendered, instead of upon empty show.

"Who's the man you're after?" asked Crockett. "Recollect, strangers, we're a quiet lot of people down here; but we are apt to get our backs up if we're aggravated."

"It's not me that would like to aggravate Colonel Crockett," said one of the officers. "We are officers from Louisville, in pursuit of a man who has broken jail."

"What's the man's name?"

"Edward Gordon."

"The deuce! Ned Gordon, hey! I heerd something of this. He made free with a bank, or something of the kind, didn't he?"

"That is what he was accused of. He was knocked down and five thousand in gold taken from him. But the bank suspected that it was a plan between him and the robbers, and arrested him on suspicion."

"And what was their proof?"

"Nothing, except that he had been seen talking to a well-known thief, only a few days before. They kept him in jail awaiting proof."

"And that didn't quite suit his ideas?"

"No. He dropped out the window one fine night and made tracks. We came down here to look for him, knowing that this is his native place."

"That's the story, hey? And you kinder thought he was in this house?"

"I know he was here. I saw him not two hours ago, and his brother has just left here. Do you know the penalty for concealing a fugitive from the officers of the law?" He now addressed the host.

"I know about this much," replied Hall. "I know you're a couple of infernal catamounts, and if you don't take your ugly faces out of my sight, I'll light on you like a panther on a hog's back. Blast your eyes, I've given you your rope, jist to see how far you would go. You're the first coves as ever made free in my house without axing me. Now you'd best take a fool's advice, and git."

"We did not wish to incommode you, sir. We were but doing our duty, and what we have warrant for."

"I don't harbor thieves and vagabonds, and I won't harbor police. Git's the word. I'm feeling kinder wolfish, strangers, and if you're not out of that door in three shakes of a coon's tail, you'll get a Tennessee welcome to the gutter."

The stalwart speaker looked really dangerous as he confronted them with angry face, his rolled-up sleeves displaying brawny, muscular arms.

"You're right, Tim. A man's house is his castle," said Crockett. "You'd better take good advice, my friends. If Tim Hall once gets his back up, there will be feathers spilt. He's not safe to play with."

"All right," replied the officer. "Our man is not here, that is evident, so we have no further occasion to stay, and Mr. Hall may have the full use of his house." The two men turned and walked toward the door.

"Hold a minute!" cried Crockett. "My body-guard is out there, and mightn't like the looks of ye."

"Your body guard!" said the officer, inquiringly.

"Yes; Old Whirlwind, who is with a troop of horse. Come in here, old coon-hunter, and show yourself," he said, opening the door and giving a shrill whistle.

This signal was followed by the advent of a strongly-built, shaggy hunting dog, whose torn ears and generally dilapidated appearance bespoke him the hero of many a contest. Yet he came frisking in with all a dog's gladness to enter forbidden places, and sprang upon his master with an effusive affection that almost overturned him.

"There, boy, that will do. Down, you rascal; do you want to upset old Davy? That's more than the bar could do to-day; hey, Whirlwind? Now, folks, there's a clean track, and no snags in the way."

"We are glad to have met you, Mr. Crockett, and hope to see you again before we return," said one of the strangers.

"Seems to me I ain't in Congress now," answered Davy.

"Colonel Crockett, I meant to say," replied the officer.

"Well, that's a handle that I often gets. If it's bar meat that you are after, I'm your man. Call on me at Crockett's Clearing, four miles t'other side of Sharksville, and I'll give you a bit of as pretty sport as ever a backwoodsman seed."

"And git out of this now," cried the host in a violent tone. "I kin chaw up and swaller six sich men any day afore breakfast, and if you don't git—"

What terrible threat Mr. Hall was about making was lost in the slamming of the door behind the retreating officers, who evidently thought discretion the better part of valor.

Davy stood, with his chin upon the muzzle of his rifle, looking at his host with an amused glance.

The latter lapsed into silence as soon as the door closed upon his intrusive enemies, not finishing the threat he had begun.

"Where is he?" was Davy's first remark.

"Who?" asked Hall, turning with some show of surprise.

"Who! Why, Ned Gordon. Who the thunder do you think I mean?"

"Didn't you jist hear me say that I didn't know nothing about him? I aint taking in runaway jail-breakers."

"Now, just shut your wind-box, Tim Hall, and don't try your gammon on me. Do you think it's a Louisville policeman you're talking to now, or a man that's followed a painter's trail for miles by the scratched bark?"

"What do you mean, Davy Crockett? You don't see no signs of Ned Gordon about here."

"Look at Whirlwind's ears, Tim; them's signs of old friends about; and when you try to play mad agin, don't lay it on quite so thick. It weren't natural, boy, no more than a woman's face when she's spread it with paint, like as I'd spread a slice of bread with wild honey. Don't be making wry faces: I can give you more signs if you want them."

"I don't know nothing about him, Davy. If he'd been here them fellers would have found him."

"Them fellows!" said Davy, contemptuously. "Do you want to put them on a trail longside of me? We'll soon see if I know a bar's paw from a painter's claw. Why, man, I've trailed Floridy Injuns twenty mile on a stretch, without half as good sign."

"Are you fur the boy, or agin him?" asked Hall, anxiously.

"I'm for the right," answered Crockett. "I always took to the lad, and will yet if he's straight. But if he's been playing thief, he's crossed clean out of my books. Where is he, Whirlwind? Find him, dog."

The animal rose from the corner in which he had stretched himself, and walked gravely across the floor.

Approaching his master, he looked intelligently up in his face. The latter patted him on the head with a kindly touch.

"Fetch him, Whirlwind," he said.

The dog's next movement was toward the table, where he took a corner of the cloak in his teeth, and with a jerk, pulled it again to the floor.

"I knowed so," said Davy, laughing. "If them fellows had eyes they'd have seen through your little game, Tim."

The fugitive raised himself from his constrained position, and smiled upon the hound, who appeared to recognize him as an old acquaintance.

"Come here, Ned Gordon," said Crockett. "You know me, let me see if I know you."

He laid his brawny hand on the shoulder of the fugitive, holding him at arm's length, and gazed with a piercing glance into his eyes.

This silent scrutiny was continued for several minutes, without a word being spoken. It was no easy matter to endure that fixed, stern glance, that seemed as if it would pierce through all the disguises of the flesh, and master all the secrets of the soul within.

Yet the other endured it without quailing. Once or twice his eyes fell, but, as it seemed, more in modesty than in consciousness of guilt.

"Sit down, Gordon, I want to talk to you," said Crockett, releasing him, and drawing up a chair for himself.

"I thought one time you were going to make a man," he continued. "You come of good stock, and you've got a brother that's a credit to the woods and that knows all the virtue of a rifle. But you got in a bad gang, and went back on your promise. I dropped you then. I want to hear you speak for yourself now."

"I have only got to say that it would have been better for me if I had followed your advice and example," replied Gordon. "But I was young then, and wild. I have learned sense since."

His inquisitor again bent upon him a scrutinizing glance.

"I've been wild myself," he said. "That is no crime. It's hard to tame young blood. Have you been honest? That is the question."

"As I am a living man, I have done nothing outside of honesty."

"I hope that's so, Ned Gordon. I always had a sort of taking for you, till you got in company that my honesty couldn't afford to keep. Drop it out now, the whole story, clean. Where have you been, and how have you lived, and what do you know about this robbery? I want a straight story, Ned, or I'll not lift a hand to help you."

"I wouldn't try anything else with Davy Crockett. I would be tripped up in a dozen words. That Jack Henderson has been my evil genius. He led the way in all sorts of wild scrapes here, and finished by getting me mixed up in an affair that would have sent the whole of us to prison, if we had not flown. Yet I had no idea at the time that anything more than a wild joke was intended. When I got north I went steamboating, but he found me, brought me into his gang, and so guarded me that I had no chance to get away from them. I would take no part in their plans, but I was conversant with more than one scheme of thieving, one in particular, in which a jewelry store was opened and a large amount of silverware and jewels stolen. I tried to give warning of this, and came near getting a bullet through me for my pains."

"Was that the Price and Ward robbery?" asked Crockett.

"Yes."

"I was in Congress at the time. There was a large reward offered."

"It still stands. I might have tried for it myself, but these fellows had treated me with some kindness, and I could not inform on them. I got away from them soon after that, and made my way west. There I did some work for a gentleman who took a fancy to me, and got me the bank position which I held in Louisville. I was there cut loose from all the old crew, and tried to build up a new record. But it is hard to leave your old life behind you. There is nothing dogs a man's life like old faults."

"So you were found again."

"Yes. I met Jack Henderson one day in the street. He instantly recognized me, and held me in conversation by threatening me with exposure."

"Which you were fool enough to give in to?"

"I don't know if it was foolish, I was trying to make a man of myself, and did not dare to defy him. He even proposed the scheme of which I was accused, to join with them in a pretended attack at some time when I had a large sum of money in hand. This I indignantly refused. The consequence was, that I was knocked down and robbed a few days afterward, fortunately when I had not much money."

"I should think five thousand dollars weren't a bad lift," said Hall.

"I often carried much larger amounts," said Gordon. "However, my old life came up against me once more. I had been seen talking with Henderson, and was arrested and put in prison on suspicion."

"And why didn't you wait and take your trial like a man? There was no proof to convict you."

"There was nothing to clear me in public opinion. I could never have held up my head again. These men had broken faith with me. I was determined to give them up to justice—and as I got weary of waiting in prison for a trial, and feared that I would lose all trace of them, I concluded to take leg bail."

"Is that all, Ned?"

"Yes; I have not spoken a word outside the truth."

"I didn't want a word from you for that," said Crockett, rising. "Honesty dwells in a man's eye, not on his tongue. I saw it in you before I asked you a question. Give me your hand, Ned. Any man that tries to live up to my motto, is a friend of Davy Crockett's."

"I told you he were square," said Hall, in a tone of triumph.

"All right, Tim. But the game's jist up. It ain't treed yet. How's the trail, Ned? Fresh?"

"Rather. I judged that the north was getting too hot to hold them, so struck down here. I have not seen any sign yet, worth much; but I think they are not far."

"I'm with you on the home-stretch; and think maybe I kin help in nosing out the trail. I seed a fellow down this way last week, that was one of Henderson's old cronies, or I've lost my eyesight."

"Where was that?"

"Out here toward the Shakes. There's a hole down there somewhere, that these fellows bunks in. What's their game, is more than I know. There's a bit of gambling going on at a little spot down on the Mississippi. But there's a deeper game played in this hiding-place. I don't know jist what."

"Thank you for the information. I will try my luck at finding out before the sun is a day older."

"Cautious, Ned. They know you. Better let me, or Rob, or some of us try."

"You, or Rob! Neither of you could anymore deal with the tricks of sharpers than a bear can play out old Whirlwind there. Trust me that I know how to manage them, and to disguise myself."

"Go ahead then, my boy, if you're sure you're right."

CHAPTER V.

WHIRLWIND ON THE SCENT.

The fugitive, by the advice of his host, left the house before daybreak, after taking a few hours sleep. He moved with great caution along the bush-lined fence, and entered a piece of woodland at the extremity of the village, sure that he had escaped the eyes of his pursuers, even if they were still on the watch for him.

Crockett had left the house a short time before, with his rifle upon his shoulder, and his dog at his heels, making his way toward the village of Wilson's Corner, the euphonic name of the scene of the shooting match.

"I intended to take a shot myself, for the honor of old Tennessee," he said to his host, "but the fact is I got on bar sign yesterday, and nothing would suit Whirlwind but I must take a tramp after bar-beef. He was a big fellow, Tim, and savage as a catamount, when I backed him up agin a big spruce down yonder by Ike Burke's shanty. If it hadn't been for the dog he'd took a mouthful or two out of my shoulder. But Whirlwind took his eye jest as he was gnawing at my gun-stock, and I socked six inches of cold steel in him afore he could get a better holt. It was a game of nip and tug, sure enough. It cheated me out of my shot on the fat ox, but I've made it up in bar grease."

While Hall was looking with admiration upon the daring hunter, who so nonchalantly related an adventure in which he had evidently run fearful risk, and narrowly escaped with life, the latter whistled for his dog and set off at a swinging pace down the road that led eastward from the village.

It was the same direction which Robert Gordon had taken a few hours before. The hunter strode on, at a pace that made little of distance, whistling as he went, though his eyes roamed from side to side and noted every feature of the road, with a keen caution born of his life in the woods, where he disputed dominion with lurking and ferocious beasts.

His pace soon brought him within the borders of the woodland, of which we have already spoken. It was as dark here still as at midnight, and he went on with diminished speed, his keen glance tracing every curve and hillock of the rough road.

The dog, which had been walking submissively at his heels, now gave a slight bark and dashed eagerly forward, disappearing at once in the darkness.

Crockett whistled loudly for him, but in vain, the animal paid no attention to his recall.

"What is it, Whirlwind, boy? Not bar, sure; nor painter, and I'll swear you wouldn't jump that way at venison. There's something odd ahead, for I've tried the dog at everything, from coon to elk, and he never acted jist that way."

Holding his rifle at a trail the woodsman dashed ahead, heedless now of the darkness and the difficulties of the road, anxious only to discover the meaning of the dog's sudden escapade.

In a few moments he heard Whirlwind barking violently. The next instant he discerned the animal returning. But seeing him coming it wheeled round and darted back, barking loudly as it did so. It was evidently inviting him to some momentous discovery ahead.

It was now near dawn, and as he neared the other extremity of the wood, a soft light broke over the ground in front, in strong contrast to the gloom that still enveloped him.

It revealed the dog, standing beside some object in the road, barking, and facing toward him as he advanced.

Another minute and he was on the spot, and looking down upon the prostrate figure of a man, pale as death in the face, while the ground under his head was crimsoned with blood.

"Well, I'll be shot, if here ain't work! Murder, sure as thunder! Who is it, Whirlwind, boy; do you know him?"

The dog answered by licking the face of the prostrate man. His master leaned forward to take a close look at the features. He started back instantly, with a fierce exclamation.

"Rob Gordon! By all that's bad, but this is a pretty piece of work. If he ain't been shot in his tracks, I'm a sinner! And if somebody don't smart for this I'll give up bar shooting."

By this time he had the insensible form in his arms, and was carrying it, with the strength of a giant, to where a tiny brook babbled across the road.

"If there's a man in Tennessee that I've a liking for, it's Rob Gordon. The handsomest figure, the neatest dancer, and the best finger at the trigger going. He was wuss than a hoss, he was a steamboat, and the man I built on to fill my place when I dropped out. And now here's some cursed galoot gone and spiled him for anything but a funeral. Shoot me if I can keep the water out of my eyes," and the strong man dashed the back of his hand across his face as if ashamed of such womanly weakness.

"A bullet don't fly though without a rifle, and a rifle don't shoot without a finger at the trigger, and the man that owns that finger has got to be ten foxes inside of one skin if he lives long to brag of this."

He had by this time reached the rivulet, and stooped over the water with his burden. The cap had dropped off, and the hair of the apparently lifeless man was matted with blood.

"He's not dead! He's good as ten dead men yet!" shouted Crockett, as he proceeded to wash the clotted blood from the hair, and noticed a clear red flow under the dark mass he had removed.

"Blast it, it's only a scratch after all, and here me frighted out of six months growth," he cried, in joyful accents, as he parted the abundant hair, and revealed his "scratch" in a long, red channel, where the bullet had ploughed its way across the skull, grazing the bone for a length of several inches.

"The lad's stunned, that's all," he continued, as he finished washing the wound, and proceeded to draw the edges together with a sticking plaster with all the skill of an experienced surgeon.

He now carried his senseless burden just inside the wood, and laid him down tenderly on a couch of long grass, his head supported on a bank of green moss.

"Watch him there, Whirlwind, lad, and don't let a fly touch him, I must go on to the next house, and bring back a horse, or some other sort of help. He's too heavy to carry far, and I consider it's half a mile, anyhow, so here goes for help."

The dog, as if understanding what was said to him, stationed himself beside the prostrate man, with an expression of gravity that would have changed on the instant to savageness, had any one sought to meddle with the grave charge which had been entrusted to him. No foot, either of man or beast, could safely venture to approach the wounded man till Whirlwind should be released from his commission.

His master was not long absent. He had found a house a short distance in advance, and returned with the householder, who brought a horse attached to a rude vehicle, on which to convey the wounded man.

The jarring, springless character of this conveyance seemed to have a good effect upon its occupant. Before reaching the house he was observed slightly to stir, and he opened his eyes as they were lifting him from the vehicle.

They carried him tenderly into the house and deposited him upon a bed, his eyes continuing open, and gazing with a vacant, bewildered glance, that showed that his senses were yet wandering.

"The best we kin do is to let him alone," said Crockett. "He's beginning to come to, and it's my notion that he'll be all right in an hour. I'm going back to see if I can find sign of the fellow that done it. I'd sooner score his skin with a piece of lead than shoot a dozen bar."

Calling the dog, he proceeded down the road to the spot in question. It was now full daylight. The sun was peeping above the eastern verge of the horizon, through a thin veil of painted clouds, and gilding the tree-tops with a warm lustre.

Countless birds in the grove had aroused to the fact that a new day had come upon the world, and were twittering and carolling their welcome to the advancing light, making the air melodious with their innumerable strains of woodland music.

But these sights and sounds had, just then, no charm for the senses of the renowned hunter, alive as he usually was to

all nature's beauties and influences. He had work in hand too stern to permit any less vital demand to claim his attention, and trod resolutely on, all heedless of the birds and the dawn.

"Lay there, Whirlwind!" he cried, repressing the eager movements of the dog. "I don't want the road torn up with your claws. Do you hear me, sir? Lay there! When I've done trying my eyes, you kin try your nose."

The intelligent beast, as if he understood his master's intention, coiled himself in a heap by the roadside, and, save for an occasional restless movement, seemed to have lost all interest in the proceedings.

Crockett proceeded cautiously down the road, his eyes keenly noting every indication of its surface, every aspect of the surrounding fields and woods.

"This shooting must have been about midnight," he said to himself, "judging from the time Rob left Tim Hall's. There's been nobody over the ground since but me. There ought to be some sign."

Just where he was the road was too hard to retain the marks of footsteps. But near where he had found the body it grew softer, and his keen glance noted the track of feet in the path.

"Two sets of feet, by the powers of old Betsy!" he cried. "And not side by side, but atop of one another. The fellow with the narrow foot and light step went first, and the flat-bottomed boot come after. I know that foot. I've seed it many a day on the track of deer and bar. I could swear that was a hunter's step if I saw it in Chiny. That's Rob Gordon, and now who owns the flat-boat foot?"

He continued onward till past the spot where Rob had been found, examining the marks as he went, and extending his search for about two hundred yards within the border of the woods.

"There, that will do," he said, coming to a halt. "It is jist what I expected. Two sets of feet here, one out and one in. Rob Gordon went down, light as a deer, and old flat-boat come after, sticking to the fence-side till he come inside the wood, and then stepping out bold. He was on Rob's trail going out, that's sartain. But where his toes point this way, he's stepped heavier and wider. I'll bet a cow he tracked Rob to Tim Hall's, and then come back here in a hurry and laid for him. He didn't take the road back after he shot, that's plain. He must have took to the woods, or the fields. Nor he didn't come out to see if he'd killed his man. He seed him drap, and then slid himself."

While thus soliloquizing, Crockett was carefully looking for some more decided marks than the ill-defined tracks in the dust from which he had derived such exact information. He found them at length, where the assassin had stepped in the edge of a ditch that ran beside the road. It was dry now, but had recently contained water, and its bottom was still rather muddy. There were five or six well-defined steps in this soft ground ere the person had regained the dry level of the road. Crockett bent over and examined these marks with the utmost attention, noting their every peculiarity.

"Seems to me," he continued, "that we want a man that wears a boot twelve inches long and four wide, with a deep heel and six nails in it, and a patch on the inside corner of the right toe. He's about six feet from top to toe, for here's where he stumbled and dropped over, and there's the marks of his stumpy fingers in the mud. He's got a ring with a big stone in it on the little finger of the left hand. That's what tore up the mud where he jerked out his fingers. So much to begin on. Now let's see his ambush."

Crockett proceeded to the lair where, crouched like a wild beast, the assassin had lain hidden, waiting for his victim's approach. It was a nest of bushes and long grass, which had been broken down and levelled with the ground by the heavy body which had waited there, perhaps for a long time, in expectant ferocity. The trail of the fleeing assassin was plainly visible to the trained eyes of the hunter, leading back through the grass of the field behind him. At a short distance, however, there was a space of hard, stony ground, destitute of grass, and unsuitable to retain any marks from passing feet.

"There's no use to strain my eyes any further. I'll try the dog's nose now. The fellow hasn't been after plunder, that's sartain. It's a grudge that's ailed him, and he hadn't the heart to wind up his work. We've only got to sarch through Rob Gordon's enemies, and they're not many. Come, Whirlwind!"

The dog had borne its long-enforced penance with evident impatience, and had failed to retain the dignified obedience with which it had first heeded its master's commands. Without exactly walking, it had managed, by a sort of wriggling motion, to approach much nearer the point of interest, dropping again into stillness at every backward glance of its master.

It needed then no second call to bring it to his side, but with one quick bound was frisking and leaping lightly around him, glad as a year-old pup at its release.

"For shame, Whirlwind," said Crockett, reprovingly, "I thought you were above all sich capers. Come, now, put your nose to this spot, and see what it smells of. Hey, boy, have you got it? I thought so, off he goes, like a deer with a bullet in his tail."

The dog had taken the scent in an instant, and darted off on the trail, with a speed that taxed the swift-footed hunter to keep pace with. Straight over the stony ground it went, turning eastward at some distance ahead, and tracking the fields in the direction of the village of Wilson's Corner.

Just before reaching here it re-entered the road. The scent here had not lain well, and had been further lost under the many feet which had already traversed that part of the road, early as the hour yet was.

But Whirlwind was no common dog. He led the way, slowly but surely, into the village, and straight toward the tavern that formed its centre, on whose porch a number of men were gathered, and within one of whose rooms the inspiring sound of a fiddle was audible.

Smelling the door-step of this house, Whirlwind looked up intelligently into his master's face, then coiled himself up into a heap and lay down beside the doorway with the air of a dog who is proud of having done his full duty.

CHAPTER VI.

THROUGH THE SHAKES.

But we must follow the adventures of Ned Gordon, the fugitive. After leaving Tim Hall's house he plunged deep into the woods, making his way, by aid of his old knowledge of woodcraft, readily in the direction he desired.

It was his intention to seek the river village mentioned by Crockett, as a resort of gamblers, but before doing so it became necessary to change, in some manner, his appearance, as it was his hope to find men there who would know him too well in his present aspect.

He was a well-built, good-looking man, of light complexion and almost beardless, with a full head of lightish-colored hair. His intercourse with light-fingered gentry had, however, taught him one lesson, useful in his present crisis, how to change his appearance.

He was even provided with the requisites for disguising himself, having prepared for this contingency before his escape from prison.

He had changed clothes with his friend Hall, and was now attired in a suit of plain home-spun, much the worse for wear, with a fur cap and the other essentials of a wild western costume.

He had also borrowed a rifle, that necessity of any one who wore the hunter's garb, and which might be needed to provide him with food during his journey through the forest.

With some inconsiderable interruptions there was a belt of forest stretching from where he stood to the Mississippi, a distance of about twenty miles. This was the primeval forest of the region. The axe of the woodsman had never yet levelled its majestic, centuries-old trees. The rifle of the hunter had not yet succeeded in destroying the abundant animal life that made a home in these forest shades.

It was the haunt of the black bear, and of that dangerous, cat-like animal, the panther, though the deadly enmity of the hunters had greatly reduced the numbers of both these animals. Deer roamed here in considerable numbers, and elk might occasionally be found, though they had mostly been driven off by the crack of the death-dealing rifle.

Of smaller game, animals and birds, the woods were full. The raccoon, the opossum, the rabbit and squirrel, and many species of edible birds, dwelt here in their original numbers, while the streams which traversed the region abounded with excellent fish.

It was no hardship then for a man skilled in woodcraft to be thrown with empty pouch and empty stomach into the heart of this forest. He but needed means of kindling a fire, a charge in his rifle, or a fishing-line in his pocket, to be able to provide himself, on short notice, with a meal of the most nourishing and palatable character.

Gordon crossed several country roads in his progress, and passed near a number of settlements and isolated clearings, but concluded to keep to the woods, which could be followed in an unbroken line westward. He feared to take the road lest he might stumble on his pursuers, who were possibly still abroad.

A few miles took him beyond the circle of settlements, and he now plunged into the heart of the woodland, broken here only by an occasional clearing. The day was about two hours old when he passed, at a short distance, the cabin of his friend Crockett, which stood in the centre of a small clearing, a good-sized but rudely-built frame building, surrounded by a few acres of farming land, which had been cleared and planted by the sturdy hands of the redoubtable Davy.

He left this at some distance to one side, as he feared to arouse some of the numerous dogs with which the hunter had surrounded himself.

He was now in the heart of the woodland, outside the borders of civilization, companioned only by the numerous small forms of life that made this scene their habitation, and that were too small and insignificant to be disturbed by the hunting fraternity while nobler game abounded.

This walk through the unbroken forest was not as easy a passage as over the paved avenues of a city. The surface was uneven, and covered with fallen leaves and twigs, with here and there a bough which had been rent bodily from its stem by tempest or lightning. Occasionally some monster of the forest lifted its roots in great ribs above the surface, or a fallen tree made necessary a wide detour to escape its hindrance. The wood was generally open, with large, majestic trunks, but here and there a dense thicket had sprung up in some old, deserted clearing, or where storm had broken its way through acres of the forest, rending in twain trunks which had borne the vicissitudes of a century's storm and calm. These, too, rendered necessary a circuitous course, and his advance was greatly delayed by these numerous impediments.

But the woodsman learns to adapt his tread to the inequalities of the ground, and his quick glance notes trouble afar off, and enables him to so shift his course as to meet with little delay from fallen tree or thicket.

Ned Gordon had gained his knowledge of the woods under the training of Davy Crockett, with whom, as a boy, he had often sought the lairs of the wild beasts of the region. This training now returned to him, and stood him in good stead in his long and difficult journey.

The sun was two or three hours high when he, at length, stopped to rest, and to discuss the luncheon which his considerate friend had placed in his pocket. He calculated on his rifle for future provision, until, at least, he should again reach the borders of civilization.

A small brook ran near where he stopped, and served him for wine-cellar, lavatory and mirror. He put it to use for the latter purpose, after he had finished his frugal meal.

A curious ground squirrel, which crouched, half affrighted, on the limb of a neighboring tree, saw with surprise this intruder draw from his pocket a sharp steel instrument, and in a moment his abundant hair was falling in great flakes to the ground.

He did not cease until his hair was cut rather close to his head, and all the glory of its clustering locks had vanished. Then drawing from his pocket a small case of bottles he proceeded to anoint his remaining hair with a dark-colored fluid. In a few minutes the inquisitive squirrel saw the blonde hair of the stranger assume a dark, almost black hue, in odd contrast to his florid complexion.

Another bottle, however, provided him with the means of changing this, and from light he became dark in face, hands and neck, until, but for his features, he might have been esteemed a mulatto. His hue was much like that of the brown-burned skin of the woodsman which his garb declared him.

The third act in this drama of transmigration was to draw from his pocket a black, woolly-looking mass. This, properly arranged, and adjusted on his nearly smooth face, and the fugitive was fitted with a full pair of brown whiskers, fixed on by hidden springs so closely that they seemed to have grown there.

Puss, from her perch on the tree, was quite overcome by this last phase of transfiguration. There was certainly something supernatural in the process that could change one man into another, and she ran briskly off, anxious to settle the momentous question over the kernel of an acorn, which she knew just where to find.

The fugitive himself, on looking down into his ready-made mirror, was surprised at the face that returned his glance from under the water, and had a momentary fancy that some water-kelpie was mocking him from the depth of its liquid retreat.

His unaccustomed dress and accoutrements added to the effect of his change of countenance, and helped to disguise him. Combing his hair straight down over his forehead, and drawing his fur cap down to the level of his eyes, he again threw the rifle over his shoulder and proceeded on his course.

For a number of miles he walked briskly on, only stopping to shoot a gray squirrel that chattered at him from the upper limbs of an oak, and which he tied over his shoulder to serve him for dinner.

The woods now grew thicker and less passable. Numerous decaying trunks impeded his way, and occasional ponds forced him to pass round their thickly-grown edges.

Several miles of this difficult ground brought him to the borders of a sheet of water wide enough to deserve the name of a lake. The wooded border of its opposite side was visible at a distance of, apparently, some two miles, while in the north and south directions no traces of its limit could be seen.

He was in the heart of the region celebrated in this district under the euphonious title of the Shakes. This title was appropriately given in signification of an earthquake which had occurred there some ten years before, and which had expended its principal fury on this spot.

The decaying trunks which had lately impeded his way were those of trees which had been hurled prostrate by this terrible force, and the lake, on whose borders he now stood, filled a cavity where the earth, with all its weight of forest trees, had sunk bodily, leaving a vast depression to be filled by the overflowing waters of the river.

There was no place in the State more frequented by bears and other wild beasts, and hence it had become a celebrated hunting-ground, and the locality of the most of those daring feats which had made the name of Crockett famous throughout the land.

The present occupant appeared to know the spot well. Proceeding to a small cove on the side of the lake, he drew a dug-out boat from a screen of bushes, and, paddle in hand, commenced a passage over the liquid obstacle that otherwise would have forced a circuitous route of many miles.

The sun beamed down with considerable warmth on the open water, and his manful striving with the paddle brought the perspiration in great beaded drops to his face, ere he finished his passage and touched with his boat's prow the green mantle of the woods on the other side.

Ablution in the cool water of a rivulet that here prattled down, soon removed the traces of exertion from his face, without—as he satisfied himself in the liquid mirror—affecting the embrowned hue which his skin had taken.

Securing the boat, he sought an open spot, and building himself a fire of dry twigs, soon had his dressed squirrel yielding savory odors, as it roasted whole over the quick fire, depending from an improvised tripod of forked sticks.

With the appetite engendered by his late exertion he made short work of his woodland meal, and was soon on his way again westward.

His tread had yet some of its morning briskness, yet the onward way was more difficult than that which he had traversed, being broken by ravines and gulches, filled occasionally with stagnant water, forming some of the minor results of the rending force that had excavated the lake.

The fallen trees, too, were here thrown down in great swathes, that looked like the work of a giant sickle that had passed with a broad sweep through the woods.

They were grown over with bushes, and festooned with clambering vines, from which depended purple bunches of wild grapes, till the scene of desolation and ruin had grown into a temple of woodland life and beauty.

But it was weary work making way through these clustering obstacles, and Ned Gordon was a very tired man, as, an hour before nightfall, he emerged from the forest depths upon the banks of a great stream that ran in majesty and grandeur forever southward.

He stood on the shores of the Mississippi, that mighty stream on whose broad bosom even at that early date, the flat-boat was being replaced by the steam-impelled craft, the precursors of the myriads of noble boats which have since ploughed its waves.

It was now, though, in pristine quiet and beauty, the unbroken forest lining either shore and the stream flowing on in unruffled grandeur, save where it swirled round a projecting headland, or eddied by some stem of a floating tree which had become lodged in the shallows.

Gordon's route took him down the banks of the stream, which here turned with a broad sweep to the west. He had received precise directions from Crockett, which, coupled with his own previous knowledge of the locality, enabled him to proceed with great confidence toward the goal of his journey.

His walk in this direction extended some four miles, a severe strain on limbs already overwearied with exertion. It ended at a village which occupied an open space on the banks of the river, and at which a long pier, extending out into the stream, betokened that it had its share of the abundant river traffic.

Brownstown, which was the name of the aspiring village, contained some fifty houses, all built of the abundant material that grew so profusely around. Its principal business was as a wooding-place for passing steamers. Yet the country back in this direction was more open than that through which Gordon had come, and considerable produce reached here to be shipped to the New Orleans market.

It held its inevitable country store and tavern, with a sprinkling of other places of business, and was famed through all the country round as a haunt of gamblers and desperadoes, who made the steamboat passengers their prey, and this one of their places of carousal over their ill-gotten gains.

The Blue Boat Inn, at which the traveller stopped and boldly ordered supper, bore anything but an enviable reputation. Its principal guests were blacklegs and professional duellists, though with them a duel meant usually a cold-blooded murder, for the majority of these bullies never offered fight till they had a decided advantage.

Heedless, however, of the character of the den into which he had obtruded, Gordon stretched his legs in the bar-room, and rested himself while he was waiting for the arrival of the supper hour. He had been curtly told that if he waited for an hour supper would be ready for all hands.

There were about a dozen persons present, none known to him, and the most of them dressed with a loud gentility, and sporting a show of jewelry, which seemed concomitants of their occupation of "gentlemen handy with the keerds." Here they threw off restraint, drinking freely, and displaying pistols and knives with a blustering bravado.

Supper over, the weary traveller felt greatly refreshed, and seated himself again in the bar-room to watch events. He was not allowed to sit long in quietness, however. One or two parties had gathered round tables and produced cards, and were amusing themselves with a quiet game.

The second of these parties asked him, with a rude effort at politeness, to join in, and take a hand, just for amusement.

"What game do you play?" asked Gordon.

"Poker, of course. There isn't any other game fit for a gentleman. Take a cheer, stranger, and a hand, jest to pass the evening."

"Don't keer if I do," said Gordon, in a drawling tone, as he seated himself in the proffered chair.

"You know we ginerally puts up a triflin' stake, jest for the spirit of the game," said the gambler, insinuatingly.

"I ain't flush, gentlemen. I'll own up plain to that. What's yer stake?"

"A dollar anty, that'll break no man."

"It's a bit too steep for my pile. Howsomever, I'll go in. I always was a bit lucky with the keerds, and I guess I won't come much out of pocket."

The game, thus instituted, proceeded briskly, the dollars changing hands with considerable rapidity, but with an evenness of distribution that kept any one from losing much.

But a spectator would have known, by their signals to each other, that the two antagonists of the traveller fancied that they had caught a green hand, and were leading him skilfully toward the pitfall of an empty pocket.

For awhile they even allowed him to win, till he was some twenty dollars ahead, deploring their ill-luck with abundant oaths.

"I'll go a V. on that," said one of the gamblers at length, as a new hand was dealt.

"I'll cover it and go an X. better," cried Gordon, slamming his money violently down.

The other appeared to attentively examine his hand.

"Here's twenty-five better. That makes a cool fifty. Do you see me, stranger, or shall I rake down?"

"Not if I knows myself," said Gordon, laying down his cards, and opening his pocket-book. "I ain't flush, lads, but I can make my bet good, and touch your mark. Here's to see you. What's your hand?"

"Ace full. That sweeps the pile, I reckon;" and he extended his hand to draw in the stakes.

"Hold your level, hoss. That cow won't jump. Here's four tens for you, and the pile's mine." And with a dexterous movement Gordon swept up the money and stuffed it into his pocket.

"By ——, you never got that hand fair," said his antagonist, jumping up in a fury. "Plank down that money, or here goes a hole through your hide."

"Bullets for two, if it's bullets!" cried Gordon, springing up and raising his rifle to his shoulder. "You've done nothing but cheat, blast you, and you can't stand a bit of your own game."

"If you're not right I'm a donkey," cried a new voice. "Drop your pistol, Bill, it's a fair sell, and the man shan't plank a cent while I'm on hand."

The voice struck Gordon familiarly, and he raised his eyes to see, gazing directly into his face, his dangerous associate of old, and the man of whom he had come here in search, John Henderson.

To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 22.)

ONE WHITE LIE.

Without, the wide park was growing rapidly dark beneath the curtain of gray cloud which, hiding the winter sunset, was fast overspreading the sky.

Within, firelight already glowed warmly in the long picture-gallery; and as the fitful gleams fell on the pictured wall, faces of dead L'Estranges shone out with sudden life. She had curled herself up comfortably on one of the broad window-seats, and pressing her cheeks against the cold glass, watched—for what was best known to herself. Soon she became a subject of speculation among the merry group whom she had deserted; who had clustered themselves round one of the large fires which blazed at either end of the gallery.

"Gertrude, why are you sitting out in the cold?"

"Gertrude, have we offended you?"

"Miss Melville, *do* come back."

"Gertrude, what are you looking at?"

"Miss Melville, shall I come and help you?"

Such were the questions they tossed over to her; but few of them were answered. Only now and then she fired back a sharp one: "What does it matter to you?" "I shall get cold if I like." "Leave me alone!"

And so after a time they did, and their laughter and gay voices rang unheeded on her ear. She never stirred, or moved her eyes from the white carriage-road, which grew less and less distinct every moment.

Now the wind began to sigh and moan through the huge branches of many a forest king; and a flake of snow came fluttering down with a wavering, lingering motion, followed by another, and another; until the air was full of them. Then, through the rising storm, Gertrude's ears caught a sound of horses' hoofs coming along at a rapid, swinging trot; her heart leaped up, and the color deepened; while a light, not of the dancing blaze, shone in her dark brown eyes. She strained her gaze through the thickening snow, and the last glimmer of daylight showed her a man on horseback at the door below. Then she made a sudden movement, as if she would join the others, but a second thought stopped her, and she returned to her old position; but the eager eyes were satisfied, and the ear was strained now to catch that footstep with such music in its fall. The door opened and it was there.

"Ah, Miss L'Estrange, how cheerful you look! How do you do?"

A tall man, with broad shoulders and a deep voice, with a strong Scotch accent in it, had found the group at the fire. Every hand was ready to meet that of David Gower.

"Cold? I should think so! A regular snowy Christmas." And then his eye began to rove; he missed something from the circle round him.

"Gertrude," called Eva L'Estrange, "here's your 'particular friend.' Come out of the cold, child."

His bright blue eyes lightened, and went straight as an arrow to the place where she was sitting: then he followed them.

"In the cold?" he said, and his voice softened exquisitely.

"I'm not cold. Mayn't I watch the snow if I like?"

"No, little one. Come to the fire."

And she came. "A little one" indeed, beside his height and breadth. As the firelight shines on her face, let us see what it is like. Not strictly beautiful by any means, compared with Miss L'Estrange's regular features; but very fair to look upon, thought David Gower.

The nose was not straight, but it was delicately shaped. The imperfect mouth was always either bewitchingly merry or seriously sweet. The brown hair and eyes were soft and bright; the low, broad brow as pure as ivory. Women invariably called her plain, but most men thought her pretty. To David Gower she was beautiful.

The circle opened to let her in, but she was not a favorite with them. She was too easily offended and sharp with her answers for the girls, and too distant and independent for the men.

But David was her particular friend. He had lately become a large landholder in the neighborhood, and farmed it himself. Extremely clever in agriculture, he became Mr. L'Estrange's right-hand in such matters, and grew so popular with the people that Mr. L'Estrange, who hoped to be returned for the county at the coming election, found in David Gower a man of great power and influence, and cultivated him accordingly. All that was known of his parentage was that his father, who was now dead, had been a Presbyterian minister.

David became a great favorite at the Hall, and nearly everybody called him by his Christian name; it seemed to come so naturally, perhaps because he was so simple, honest, and straightforward in his ways. And so it was that Gertrude Melville, coming to stay at her uncle's house, had taken it into her wilful little head that nothing on earth would please her but to ride a rough pony every day of her life over the fields and roads with David Gower.

"Really it is not proper," objected Mrs. L'Estrange.

"Pooh! old David is like a father," replied her husband. "Let the child alone; it does her good."

And she was "let alone," after a brief remonstrance from her aunt, to which she replied, "I don't care to ride properly, with a groom behind me. And I mustn't hunt; but David often goes over hedges and ditches, and that is what *I* like. It's all right, Aunt Ellen!"

So over hedges and ditches Miss Gertrude went to her heart's content—but not to David's—for he became so dreadfully alarmed for that pretty, slender neck, that it was a great relief to him when she gradually became less and less attached to "cross country" riding, and took to liking quiet canters down lonely lanes; and still better when she grew tired even of a canter, and their horses walked slowly side by side, and long, long talks beguiled the flying hours. The fairy beauty of the frosty morning, the roar of the forest trees, the bare branches that would bud again in spring-time, the dead-leafed earth, which only slept, had for them eloquent teachings; voices that spoke low, and near to their hearts; until strange silences used to fall between them, as they rode side by side through the wintry land.

Somehow Gertrude was changed. Her wildness had departed, she was softer and gentler. Until Mr. L'Estrange triumphantly inquired of his wife whether David Gower had done any harm.

"No, unless she has fallen in love with him." To which her wise husband replied with a laugh of contempt, "In *love* with him? Why, my dear, *David* is not the sort of fellow girls fall in love with, I can tell you."

But Mrs. L'Estrange might be supposed to know a little more about the matter than he did. She knew a very short road to a woman's heart, with which David Gower in all unconsciousness seemed to be very well acquainted; and that was, a gentleness of manner, and an air of protecting strength, which made you turn to him in trouble, and feel ready to face any danger by his side. Therefore, when this change came over Gertrude, her aunt felt much relieved to think her visit was nearly at an end.

But alas for the "little one!" She crouched down in her corner by the fire, and gazing on the face of her "particular friend" as he talked with the others, kept saying over to herself with a miserable despair, "Only a week more! Only a week more! O, I cannot, *cannot* go away!" And she repeated aloud, "I cannot, and I *will* not!"

"O, dear me, Gertrude, what an awful little witch you are!" exclaimed Eva. "She is talking to herself in a most dreadful manner, Mr. Gower."

Poor Gertrude grew crimson to her forehead, and in another moment tears would have blinded her frightened eyes, for twelve bantering remarks were addressed to her at once; but David came to her assistance saying, "They shall not tease you! They dare not, if I protect you."

Gertrude recovered herself and laughed. "I was half asleep, I think," she said. "Firelight does make one so sleepy. Eva, it must be time to dress for dinner." But she did not look up or speak to him who was standing by her side. And as the circle broke up, she went soberly away with the other girls, leaving him thoughtful and silent, with the gentlemen by the fire.

A very deep fit of thoughtfulness indeed seemed to have fallen upon David Gower, and he sat through the long dinner almost in silence. His eyes were always wandering down the table to where a light figure in a white dress, with variegated holly in her hair, sat on the other side. Now and then, he saw how her eyes seemed to search for his, from which, when they had found them, they dropped or turned away in sweet confusion; and some one, speaking to him after one of these glances, was struck by the radiant smile that lit up his grand, good face, making it positively handsome.

The evening came to an end—Christmas Eve, and the ladies had retired. Eva L'Estrange and her friend Mary Vere were chatting together in the latter's room, until Eva, looking at the clock, and finding it two or three minutes to twelve, proposed that they should listen for the Christmas bells before going to bed.

"Then, let us come into the gallery. The windows look right on to the church, and we can open a shutter."

So they went—in their pretty dressing-gowns, with their bright hair upon their shoulders, looking almost like the angels of long ago, as they glided along until they reached the folding-doors of the picture gallery.

One was half open, and a faint glimmer from the turned down lamps showed them that which made them catch their breaths as each whispered, "Is it a ghost?" They had nearly turned and fled, when their eyes, becoming more accustomed to the dim light, beheld, not a ghost, but a huge burglar, all in black—David Gower, in fact, with Gertrude by his side.

"Hush!" murmured Eva. "Well, I never!"

"Is he making her an offer?" asked Mary Vere.

There stood Gertrude, in her white dress, with both her hands in David Gower's, but there was no sound of a word; and so deep was the silence that softly as dream-bells upon the night breeze, came the swelling peal that rang in Christmas morn. At this moment Eva, moving her hand which held her brush, knocked it against the door: the sound went echoing down the gallery, and at the noise Gertrude sprang from David's side, while the two girls turned round and rushed away, but not before a stifled laugh reached the ears of the other two.

"Oh, what was it?" exclaimed Gertrude, in dismay.

"Only those mischievous girls," replied David. "Never mind; they would not see us—exactly; and you were looking for your brooch, you know."

But bidding him a hurried "good-night," Gertrude ran away to her room.

David had not made her an offer at all, and their interview, so rudely interrupted, was in this wise. Gertrude, in her room, dreamily taking off her ornaments before undressing, suddenly missed a favorite brooch she had worn during the day. Believing she had dropped it on the window-seat in the gallery, she straightway went to look for it, and was in the act of turning up one of the lamps when David (who had been changing his evening coat for a smoking one) came across the gallery on his way down-stairs. She explained her errand, and they were searching together when, suddenly and sweetly, the first peal of those midnight bells broke upon their ears.

"Hush!" Gertrude had softly said; "it is Christmas morning." And lifting her eyes to his face, had met there an expression which sent a quiver of joy through every vein. She was turning again to her search, when, taking her hands, he had said, tenderly, "At least I may wish you a happy Christmas, child."

The words had but left his lips when that sound of stifled laughter told they were discovered. Gertrude's cheeks were burning when she reached her room.

"And yet, why should I care?" she argued. "David and I will be engaged before long." And she clasped her hands together with a little rapturous gesture, as she stood dreaming in the red fire-glow.

But the next day passed, and the next, and David was still silent, while Eva and Mary Vere teased her unceasingly. Then came a great pain into Gertrude's heart, and fear that, after all, perhaps, he only cared for her as the "little one," and she should have to go away into the wide, dark, desolate future, without the love of David Gower.

Every fibre of her young heart was thrilling with the sharp pangs of dying hope, when one day Eva, mentioning her going away, said more seriously than usual: "Well, Gertrude, and when is your engagement with Mr. Gower coming out?"

Smarting under the wound so roughly touched, she turned round, and answered, "Don't talk such nonsense, Eva! If you think I am going to marry a common farmer like him, you are wonderfully mistaken."

"Oh, I beg your pardon, dear," replied Eva, laughing, and some one calling her in the hall, she ran out of the room.

It was the library they were in together. Dark with the snowy day, and heavy curtains, draping the deep bay-windows; but the fire-light was pleasant, and the two girls had sauntered in, attracted by its warmth. Gertrude was a great deal too restless to remain there by herself, and was slowly crossing the room, when she suddenly became aware of a gentleman in one of the windows. Her heart turned sick and cold as she saw the face of David Gower.

"Oh, David, David!" she exclaimed recklessly, and stretching out her hands toward him, "I did not mean it! indeed, I did not mean it!"

He made no reply; did not even turn his face toward her, but in the expression of every altered line she knew without doubt, that he did indeed love her, and covering her face with her hands, she burst into a passion of tears.

Presently some one spoke; but was it David's voice, so choked and changed? Yet it was a tender, sorrowful one.

"Don't cry, Gertrude—never mind."

"Oh, David!" she said, lifting up her face in an agony of supplication, "forgive me; indeed, I did not mean it!"

"Child, child, don't cry so; you *are* forgiven."

Tender as the voice was, she felt all hope was past. Was it likely he could believe she did not mean it? Her tears ceased, and she was still now from very despair. Gently he led her to the fire, making her sit down; then taking her nerveless hand in his, and telling her to think no more about it, he turned quietly away, and left the room. Gertrude saw him no more.

Silence is golden when its sweet eloquence falls between hearts sure of each other; golden when it tells what words are weak to say; but *death*, when its dark pall drops over absence and misunderstanding. To Gertrude it was a slow, gnawing pain, eating away all her youth and freshness. She was at home. Her father was an artist, her mother, Mr. L'Estrange's sister, an elegant, high-bred woman, who, in an hour of youthful enthusiasm and romance, linked her fate with that of the handsome artist. Children and poverty were the result.

A small, pretty villa was their house; an easy distance from London, and on the estate of Lord Westerleigh, whose agent was rather too particular about the tenants' rents to please Mr. Melville. "I shall go abroad," he often threatened. "In Italy, that land of art, the inspiration of genius will never leave me."

But he never went—idling on at home, doing a picture now and then, while his difficulties yearly increased. These Mrs. Melville had struggled thus far to keep from her brother's knowledge, and prevented her husband from writing to him for help, by working herself for the money supposed to come from him. For Mr. L'Estrange had been strongly opposed to her marriage, prophesying much misery as the result. As it was, he very possibly guessed a little how things were, for Gertrude always returned from her yearly visit laden with gifts. Mr. Melville was in one of his threatening moods when she came home this time. The Christmas bills were rolling in fast, and he told her that she had seen the last of Eden vale, for that he was going to take them all to Italy. Gertrude did not much care; there was nothing but silence everywhere, and so heavily did it lie on her own heart that her mother thought she was ill. Then she roused herself, to help with the little ones, teaching one or two; to talk art to her father in the evenings; and to listen to her mother's forebodings during the day.

But it was like walking through a land of darkness—for a land of darkness and a great gulf lay between her and David Gower. There was no voice or hope anywhere; and only increased dreariness came with the cold, dull evenings of March. Then came the sweet spring days, when the birds, seeming to catch faint echoes of the

"Triumph songs of Heaven,"

shook out of their little throats floods of rapturous music. And the promise of the year fulfilled itself in dreamy, balmy summer. Then, when all was bright and joyous, Gertrude nearly broke her heart with tears, and deeper and closer round her fell that heavy spell of silence that was sapping her life away. When the autumn leaves began to fall, Lord Westerleigh

died—and at the Park, too, where he had come for the shooting. He had been an unmarried man, and the estate and title went to a distant cousin. What the new Lord Westerleigh was like was a subject of eager interest to his tenants. Mr. Melville only hoped he would turn off that fellow Laken, the agent—for if not, he should certainly inform his lordship that he could not remain a tenant any longer. Mrs. Melville only hoped there would be a lady at the Hall at last, and Gertrude neither thought nor cared anything about it. There was a grand funeral, and the new lord was present; those who saw him, described him as a tall, big, youngish man, but the Melvilles did not see him. He remained two days at the Park, and then went away until the following January, when he was coming back to take up his quarters there permanently.

On one of these two days Gertrude saw a ghost. She was wandering through Westerleigh Park engrossed with her own sad thoughts, and was only recalled to external things by a low, savage bellow close at hand. Looking up, she found herself near to a herd of cattle, and a huge brown bull tossing the mud over his shoulders, his head low, his eyes glaring, with every intention of coming at her. With a cold feeling of terror at her heart, she looked round wildly for some way to escape. At a short distance there was a hedge and a stile, and that was her only chance, but she was so frightened that she felt her limbs would never bear her so far. The bull now twisted up his tail preparatory to a rush, and, with a cry for help, Gertrude turned round, and fell. That cry was answered instantly, for she had scarcely touched the ground when a strong arm raised her, and the next moment she was on the other side of the stile, and in safety. During that first terrified moment she had looked up into the face of her deliverer, and then, the effects of the fright and unexpected relief acting upon nerves already unstrung, resulted in unconsciousness. But she was safe in those protecting arms, and as she rested in them, senseless, they folded her passionately to their owner's broad breast.

Gertrude soon recovered, and found herself lying in a cottage close by; while a woman she knew well attended her.

"Dear me, how foolish I am!" she said, raising herself on her arm; "but it was that horrid bull, Mrs. Foster."

"And enough to frighten you to death, indeed, miss. It's a shame to leave that beast loose; I'm sure it was a mercy the gentleman was there."

"Who was it?" asked Gertrude, as the color came back richly to her cheeks.

"That's more than I know, miss; he's quite a stranger to me, but dear me, *such* a gentleman! Are you better now, dear?"

"Oh, yes!" said Gertrude, putting her feet to the ground. "I'm all right, thank you. Good-bye, Mrs. Foster."

Her heart was beating wildly with a joyful expectation as she hurried away down the lane. Her deliverer was no stranger to *her*, for in the face she had seen for one moment, bending so anxiously over her, she had recognized David Gower. But why was he there? If to see her, why had he not stayed to speak to her? Yes! she had seen him! He was no myth, for she had been saved by his stalwart arms, but he had only done what any other man would do, and left her without a word. He had vanished as mysteriously as he appeared; in vain her eager eyes searched the wide expanse of park, and the long, straight lane before her, there was no living creature in sight, but the browzing cattle—no sound, but the fall of dead leaves, as they rustled drearily to the ground. A day or two of feverish expectation followed, but he appeared no more, and sadly this last hope faded and died. Still it was sweet to owe her life to him.

Christmas came and passed. Mr. Laken could not get Mr. Melville's rent, and no promises on his part of paying in a week's time, or of reporting the agent to Lord Westerleigh, prevented him from putting in a distress.

"It shall be paid at the end of the week," said Gertrude, for she had persuaded her mother to let her write to Mr. L'Estrange. "Can you not take my word?" she added, indignantly.

"I don't care for words, Miss Melville," replied the agent. "You have five days, and the man will behave himself."

"Very well," said Gertrude briefly; and with that she put on her hat, and set off across the park. She was going to the house; she knew Lord Westerleigh had arrived the day before, and she believed a gentleman would take the word of a lady. It was already dark when she rang the bell at the great door, but the sounding echoes stirred no feeling of awe or misgiving in her heart. A servant appeared, and she asked for Lord Westerleigh. The man was a stranger, and replied, simply, that "my lord was engaged."

"Then, I will wait until he is disengaged," replied Gertrude.

"But I don't think my lord can see you at all to-night. You had better call again in the morning." And he prepared to shut the door as he spoke.

Gertrude was almost in a passion, but controlled herself.

"I think he *will* see me. Be kind enough to tell Lord Westerleigh that Miss Melville would be glad to speak to him for a few minutes." As she made a step forward the light fell full upon her, and the dignity of her manner and appearance seemed suddenly to convince the man that he was speaking with a lady. He begged her pardon, and wanted to show her into a room while he went with her message to his master, but Gertrude preferred remaining by the fire in the hall. In a minute or two he returned, requesting her to follow him, and she soon found herself in a small, comfortable room, lighted only by the fire. The walls and curtains were crimson, relieved by lace, and a few marble statuettes; the furniture and carpet were of the same color, and the warm firelight glowed over everything.

On the hearth, with his back to the fire, stood Lord Westerleigh; a man with a fine, tall figure, but whose face she could not see. To her surprise, he came forward with an out-stretched hand, when the servant lighting some candles on the table, revealed his face. Gertrude shrank foolishly back from the hand she was about to take, and found herself face to face with *David Gower*.

"I beg your pardon," she began, turning white to the lips. "It was Lord Westerleigh I came to see."

Rather a mournful smile came to his lips as he put his hand behind him, and replied—

"I thought you knew I was Lord Westerleigh."

"Lord Westerleigh!" repeated Gertrude, the blood rushing to her brow. "I did not know it, indeed."

"Don't apologize, Miss Melville. Will you shake hands with me *now*?" he said, holding out his hand again.

"And gladly," came from Gertrude's full heart.

He smiled, and taking her hand, said with his old kind voice, so that she could have knelt down and kissed his feet—

"And what can I do for you?"

Tears rushed to her eyes and she looked down to hide them, but he must have seen them, for he turned round, and stirred the fire to give her time. Then she told her story, with a red flush of shame on her brow.

"My father must leave, I know, and we must live differently; but if you will tell Mr. Laken to take the man away, he shall have the money by the end of the week."

Lord Westerleigh did not reply at once; he walked backward and forward twice.

"I am so ashamed," he said at length, "that such a thing should have been done in my name. I will walk back with you, and set it right. I am very, very sorry."

Gertrude made no reply. It was she who felt ashamed, for he whom she had called a "common farmer" was Lord Westerleigh, and far above her—so far that he had evidently quite forgotten any affection he might once have had for her, and a bitter pang was making itself felt in her heart as she saw in his calm, unembarrassed manner no sign of the love that had once been hers.

So they walked back together through the dark evening. Not many words passed between them, and Gertrude tried to realize that David Gower and Lord Westerleigh were one and the same person. She was wondering how it was they had heard nothing of the matter from the L'Estranges; but then she remembered that they were still abroad, having gone at the end of the summer. In spite of his altered manner, she felt strangely happy walking once more by his side—so conscious of the charm of his protecting presence.

The house-door stood open, and Mrs. Melville was peering into the darkness.

"Gertrude! Is that you?" she called, anxiously.

Gertrude ran forward, and nestling up to her mother, murmured—

"Here is Lord Westerleigh, mamma; and he will take the man away." And before Mrs. Melville could ask for an explanation, she rushed out of sight up to her own room, where a pent-up burst of tears would be restrained no longer. When they had exhausted themselves, she sat and listened for sounds below. For some time all was silent; then the drawing-room door opened, and she heard Lord Westerleigh and her father's voices as they walked down the passage. A cordial "good-night" closed the interview, and as the hall-door closed, Mrs. Melville came upstairs into Gertrude's dark room.

"Is it all right, mamma?"

"Yes, my dear—but how was it you never told us you had met Lord Westerleigh at your uncle's?"

It was well for Gertrude the darkness hid her tell-tale cheeks.

"Why, mamma, I never knew he was Lord Westerleigh until I saw him this evening. He was only Mr. Gower, you know."

"I should have blamed you for going to him, if he *had* been a stranger, Gertrude."

"But is he not kind and good?" She was so bold in the dark!

"Good and kind? indeed he is, God bless him," replied Mrs. Melville, earnestly. "Your father is to begin painting his portrait immediately. He said he considered himself fortunate in finding an artist so near. He is going to have his house full of visitors soon, and he hopes I will go and help him entertain them. Oh, Gertrude!" said poor Mrs. Melville, with tears in her voice, "you cannot tell what it will be to me to go back once more into the society of my youth!"

Gertrude's arms were round her mother's neck; she felt very happy, somehow.

"Dear mamma, I am so glad! You are too pretty never to be seen."

Mrs. Melville laughed, and kissed her.

"How curiously things happen," said Gertrude; but her mother did not answer, for a dim dream of a possible future was dawning on her mind.

And now Gertrude's life was changed—the silence was broken. There was a voice somewhere always singing to her inmost heart, an echo, perhaps, of Lord Westerleigh's few words of greeting, which were hers now two or three times a week, for he came to Mr. Melville's house to sit for his portrait—he said he preferred it—and thus came across her now and then in her walks. Once or twice they nearly fell back into the old way of conversation, as when they used to ride side by side at Eden vale; but Lord Westerleigh always checked himself if they seemed to be drifting too far in that direction. His manner was most kind and friendly always, but his voice never once dropped into the tender tone of old; yet Gertrude was not unhappy, because he was present.

His visitors arrived, and Mrs. Melville was much at the Hall. He apologized, as he said, for the trouble he was giving her, adding that he had a sister engaged now in attendance upon an invalid aunt, who in a few months, he hoped, would come to live with him and do the honors of his house. Gertrude and her father were also often invited, and about that time a rumor arose that Lord Westerleigh was about to take to himself a wife; but which of those fair girls, who with their fathers, mothers, and brothers, had been his guests, was to be the future mistress of Westerleigh, Gertrude could not discover. But the truth of the report she never doubted, and in her mind it was confirmed one lovely spring Sunday, when an old and a young lady appeared in the Hall pew.

For who but his betrothed wife could that fair woman be, with the calm, sweet face, who sat, and stood, and knelt by Lord Westerleigh's side? Gertrude's eyes sought here with all her soul in them. "And who so fit to be his wife?" was her despairing comment. A woman near to his own age, beautiful, dignified, with a sweet, intellectual face, grave and restful, the promise of a wise, gentle ruler of his house, and a guardian angel of his life. Gertrude's eager, sorrowful face, could scarcely escape the notice of her on whom it was fixed, and she saw her bend toward Lord Westerleigh when the service was over, evidently with an inquiry; for he, half-glancing at Gertrude, looked away with a brief reply.

A slight lifting of the eyebrows, and then came a new light into those blue eyes that were such a match for David's, while Gertrude slipped away shrinking and shivering under their gaze.

She ran out into the woods that afternoon, for she wanted to find out how to bear her fate; she believed that was decided now, and discovered that the voice which had broken the silence, had been but the voice of hope telling a flattering tale. She was treading on blue hyacinths, crushing them ruthlessly, and plucking hawthorn blossoms indiscriminately, as she walked, when suddenly she looked up as if by instinct, and saw the object of her thoughts close at hand. She started on one side to get away through the trees, but Lord Westerleigh's voice brought her to a stand-still.

"Gertrude,"—(how strange, he had not called her that for many a day)—"Gertrude, I want to introduce you to my sister."

His sister!

The manner with which she received his communication did not escape Lord Westerleigh's notice, although he was very far from attributing it to its true cause. The change of expression seemed to him to indicate extreme surprise; and one day he asked her why.

Miss Gower had gone away again for a time before coming to settle at Westerleigh for good. And one lovely evening in June, Lord Westerleigh had strolled into the villa, and was standing with Gertrude at the drawing-room window.

"Why were you so astonished when I introduced my sister to you that Sunday?" he inquired.

"Because I never thought she was your sister," replied Gertrude.

"Who, then, did you take her for?" he asked.

"Why—" said Gertrude quietly, "I thought she was the lady who was to be your wife."

"My *wife*?" Lord Westerleigh's broad brow contracted, and he bent his blue eyes sternly upon Gertrude's unconscious face. She was gazing out into the fair twilight, but not so dreamily as a minute ago.

"*My wife?*" he repeated, and the sternness of his voice recalled her attention. She looked up at him, and colored slightly.

"What chance is there of that now?" he continued. "If any one had cared for humble David Gower, it would have been different; but now rank and wealth are in the way, how shall I learn to believe that I might be loved for *myself*?"

It was scarcely the passing breeze that made Gertrude shiver from head to foot.

"I don't know," she said through the pain his words had roused. "If you cannot believe in any one, you will never know."

Hot and fast in the twilight tears were springing to her eyes. She had nearly turned round and rushed away, but his voice stopped her. He spoke very sorrowfully—

"I believed once."

Whether Gertrude would have thrown herself (figuratively) at his feet, and entreated him to believe again, it is impossible to say; for the maid, opening the door, brought in the lamp, upon which, Lord Westerleigh said "good-night" hastily, and went away.

After that Gertrude was from home for some time visiting her mother's friends, and when she returned found the L'Estranges at Westerleigh Park. An arrangement had been made in her absence—Mr. L'Estrange had discovered at last how things were, and Mr. Melville's great desire to go to Italy; therefore to Italy he had promised to send them, and start them fairly there. It was with a pang of despair that Gertrude first heard the news—and to go so soon, too! this was the end of September, and they were to go in a month's time. But she got over the despair, and came to the conclusion that, after all, she should be happier, away from Lord Westerleigh, than continually harassed by his presence; for their intercourse with each other now had become distant and cold. Eva still joked her about him, and declared she could not understand it at all.

"For you know, Gertrude, you did care for each other."

"And what if we did?" Gertrude asked bitterly.

Eva gave her a scrutinizing glance, and was very much puzzled.

"Well, dear—never mind! you will see some one nicer abroad."

That Gertrude might find some one there Mrs. L'Estrange happened casually to remark that evening in Lord Westerleigh's presence. Mr. L'Estrange "hoped so," and called his wife's attention to a book he was examining. Then Eva turned to Lord Westerleigh, and said, in her off-hand, laughing way—

"You were her first love, you know."

"You flatter me, Miss L'Estrange," he quietly replied; but his color changed.

"I never flatter!" laughed Eva.

"Can you be serious?" he said, bending anxiously toward her.

"O, I never pledge myself to anything! Where is mamma going?" And Eva, fearing to be questioned further, rose from her seat and left him.

To-morrow the Melvilles were to leave Westerleigh. The October twilight was falling fast. Lord Westerleigh had been to bid them good-bye, and was gone. The last finishings of packing were over, and Mrs. Melville sat down to rest.

"I must see him once more," said Gertrude to herself, as she hurried across the Park with an uncontrollable sob rising now and then in her throat.

An old public path ran close by one side of the house—a gable end, jutting out by itself, and containing on its ground floor Lord Westerleigh's own study. Laurels had been planted in front of the window to screen it from the footpath, and although the latter was now disused, the shrubs were still allowed to grow thick and tall.

To this spot Gertrude hurried her steps. The evening was darkening, so there was no fear of discovery, and she hoped to catch one glimpse of his beloved face before the shutters were closed. With a beating heart she opened the little gate, and gliding into the shelter of the laurels, glanced at the window. She was not disappointed—there, in the fire-light, with his dog lying at his feet, sat Lord Westerleigh. But she had only time to observe that his face was buried in his hands, when the dog sprang toward the window with a growl. Gertrude grew cold with terror—escape was impossible, and discovery next to certain, for the dog, tearing at the window, refused to be quieted. Lord Westerleigh, who had followed him, now opened the glass door, and the animal rushed at the laurels. No sooner had he reached them, however, than his bark ceased, and he began to fawn and wag his tail, knowing Gertrude well. She was cowering back into the shrubs—her face hidden in her hands.

"Gertrude! Can it be *you?*" asked a well-known voice. "What are you doing here?"

Turning from him with a throbbing heart and burning cheeks, she told him the truth.

"I only wanted to see you once more through the window, before I went away. You know we used to be friends."

He made no reply, but led her in, and closed the door again. He felt she was trembling violently, but he did not ask her to sit down; he let her stand beside him by the fire. The hopeful doubt he had aroused in his heart was satisfied now, and he was so happy that he could afford a joke.

"But, Gertrude, I was once a 'common farmer.'"

"O, don't!" she cried; "don't be so cruel now. Let us be friends, and say good-bye." And she burst into tears.

"Say good-bye, little one? Never again, my darling, never again!"

And taking her in his arms, he held her there, as if indeed he never meant to let her go again.

"O, David, David! do you believe me now?" said Gertrude, her voice smothered in his broad breast; "that I only said it because—because—"

He interrupted her tenderly.

"Never mind—because you *loved* me, dearest. O, child, what a fool I have been!"

She tried to answer, but he took it in the way he liked best. And she was silent in her full, deep joy, thinking it must be a dream to stand there in the red fire-light with David's arm to rest on.

"O, David," she said at length, clinging to him; "it cannot, cannot be true."

"Thank God, it is!" he murmured, as he raised the little wistful face to his and held it there.

Once more, through the darkness they walked back across the Park and presented themselves before the astonished eyes of Mr. and Mrs. Melville.

David was very abrupt. "You must stay another week," he said, "and leave me a wife."

They did so. And at the end of the week drove away to the station, leaving Gertrude and Lord Westerleigh at the church door.

And quietly through the brown October woods—through the golden light of autumn days—with the full, sweet springtime of love in their hearts, the bride and bridegroom walked home.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

BY OLIO STANLEY.

"You certainly won't choose that," said Mrs. Lapier, bending over the shining fabrics that were thrown across Martha Perry's crimson lounge. "It is lovely, of course—the purple one, I mean—and would look well on any one with black hair; on me, for instance," she added, laughing. "But it will never do for your blonde beauty! Take the blue one, cherie; it is just the color of your eyes, and I know your husband will be delighted with your choice."

"It is rather your choice, is it not?" young Mrs. Perry asked, wavering in her resolution. "I had really set my heart on the purple silk."

"You can wear it, of course, as you can any color, but the other is a thousand times the prettiest."

"But I have paid for the silk. That tissue they only sent up for me to look at," said Mrs. Perry, evidently annoyed at her friend's words.

Mrs. Lapier was silent a moment, and then broke out into a merry laugh.

"Just the thing, my dear, and I had almost forgotten it! There is the reception at Lou Warren's next week, and I actually haven't a dress fit to wear. I'll take the silk, and you shall keep the blue one, and we shall certainly be the most beautiful women there! Ah," with a little sigh of envy, "how charming your pearls will look over that soft sky-blue!"

"I hadn't thought of that," she said. "And I could not wear them with the other, you think?"

"The effect would be spoiled," was the quick reply. "So it is settled, then; darling, and I'll run away with my prize, and let you bundle yours up before your husband comes in. Don't tell him what you are going to wear; let it be a surprise."

And Justine Lapier caught up the gleaming purple silk, and turned away with it hanging over her arm.

And shy little Martha Perry did not know what to say, and so said nothing.

Until—just as her friend reached the door, she sprang after her, saying in a nervous voice:—

"Oh, Justine, this blue tissue isn't paid for, and I haven't money enough left to pay for it, either."

"You sly little puss! You didn't think I would let you pay for it, did you? I shall pay for it, of course, and in a few days I will hand you the difference between the two. I haven't it just now—will next week do?"

"Yes," said Martha, slowly.

"Good-bye, then. Put away that beauty, and let us keep our secret until the night of the reception."

"Very well." And Martha stooped with a little sigh to fold up the blue tissue; and before her husband's return, she had laid it carefully away in her drawer, turned the key in the lock, and taken up the last magazine to read.

It was the first secret she had kept from her husband, although they had been married nearly two years, and it was a difficult task she had set herself. She told the truth, though, when in answer to his anxious questionings about her altered looks, she said she had a headache.

She had a headache, but the heartache which she experienced was by far the most acute.

The eventful night came, and little Mrs. Perry looked very lovely in her blue tissue and pearls. Her husband, scarcely knowing the difference between silk and tissue, admired her more than he ever had done as her lover, and she tried hard to convince herself that she was satisfied with what she had done.

As they sat waiting for the carriage, Edwin Perry turned suddenly to his wife and said:

"By the way, Martha, I am glad we don't see much of Mrs. Lapier lately. I was afraid at one time that her frequent visits meant friendship, and she is the last woman I should want to see you friendly with."

"Why?" asked Martha, slowly, a hot flush reddening her cheeks.

"Because I think she is a dangerous woman," he said, thoughtfully. And then he told his wife of a conversation he had overheard between Justine Lapier and Renie Duvalle, her companion and servant, whom she alternately petted or insulted as was her mood.

"They were eating an ice, and I was next them, though they could not have seen me when I came into the saloon; and really, darling, she talked shockingly of some of the ladies in the house here. She is going away to-night, forever, as she assured Renie, who appeared to doubt her, and she has jewels belonging to one friend, money loaned by another, a silk dress teazed away from another, and—"

"Oh, Edwin!" sobbed Martha, never heeding his astonished looks as she threw herself into his arms, "it is mine! Can't you get it back?"

It was some time before Edwin Perry understood; but when he did he went up to Mrs. Lapier's room with his wife, who, meeting that lady at her own door, bravely asked for her dress which Mrs. Lapier had forgotten to pay for.

There were a few hot words of anger and reproach, but when she saw Mr. Perry's determined face, she went back, tossed the bundle, which had never been untied, through the open door, and shut it in their faces.

Mrs. Perry's face flushed with wounded feeling, but her husband laughed as he told her that the lady they had left was evidently a friend in need, though not a friend in deed.

And Mrs. Perry wore the purple silk at the very next party they attended, wisely resolving as she put it on, to have no more secrets from her husband, and to trust no more friends, unless they were such in deed.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH AND OTHER ESSAYS. We are pleased to hear that Mrs. PENNE EARLE GIBBONS designs issuing a second edition of her valuable and interesting book on the "Pennsylvania Dutch" and kindred subjects. The second edition will contain two new sketches, one on Bethlehem and the Moravians, the other upon the Schwenkfelders, a kind of German Quakers residing in Eastern Pennsylvania. There also will be notices of the Russian Mennonites, &c. Mrs. Gibbons is a very conscientious and intelligent writer, and the accuracy of her work may be implicitly relied upon. Her account of the quaint usages of the German sects, including the descriptions of "An Amish Meeting," a "Dunker Love Feast," &c., are said by the poet Whittier to be "full of interest." To Pennsylvanians especially this work must be of peculiar value, and should find a place in every public and private library. The volume will be published by subscription at $1.50 a copy. Orders should be directed to Mrs. Gibbons, care of J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philada.

WHAT KATY DID AT SCHOOL. By SUSAN COOLIDGE, author of "The New Year's Bargain," and "What Katy Did." Boston: Roberts Brothers. For sale by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philada. Those who have read with delight last year's holiday volume, "What Katy Did," only need to be told that the same charming writer and illustrator have produced a still better book in the one before us. The perfect naturalness of these school-girls, in their many piquant varieties of character, is such as to send girl-readers of the same age into ecstasies. They laugh uncontrollably over the clever pranks of pretty, mischievous, fascinating Rose Red, are captivated by the wit and sweetness of Clover, and take the good, lovely Katy right into their hearts as a true, dear friend, whose doings at home and at school help them over their own rough places.

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY. The January number contains "The Singer's Hill," (illustrated), "The Great Air-Line to the Moon," "Boudoir Prophecies," by John Hay; "Earthen Pitchers," by Rebecca Harding Davis; "Irreparable," by R. H. Stoddard; and numerous other articles—making an excellent number. Published by Scribner & Co., New York.

THE GALAXY. The January number contains "The Duke of Argyll," by Justin McCarthy; "The Wetherel Affair," by J. W. De Forest; "Voices," by F. A. Brown; "Views Abroad," by Albert Rhodes, &c. Published by Sheldon & Co., New York.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. The January number contains, "Prudence Palfrey," by T. B. Aldrich; "The Golden Wedding of Longwood," by J. G. Whittier; "Fox-Hunting in England," by S. E. Waring; "The Two Homes," by Bayard Taylor, &c. A "Serial Story" is announced as in preparation by the distinguished Howells, which doubtless is designed as a model for the imitation and instruction of authors generally. Published by Hurd & Houghton, New York—Boston office, Noyes, Holmes & Co., 219 Washington st.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ Blankets are supplied to poor children in Prussia, at two cents per head.

☞ A Buffalo widow aged 50, recently married the husband of her deceased daughter.

☞ In Japan, newspaper editors are among the class privileged to carry swords.

☞ A happy couple living in Adams, N. Y., have been married over 94 years.

☞ One hundred and thirty-six lives are said to have been lost in boring the Hoosac Tunnel.

☞ A very fat man saved the life of a gymnast in St. Louis recently. He was directly underneath when the gymnast fell.

☞ What was intended for a mock marriage at a Fond du Lac evening party has been found to be a legal one, and the funny pair find themselves compelled to make the best of it.

☞ An English real-estate speculator recently offered a popular preacher $10,000 a year, to settle in the neighborhood of his property, to send up its value.

☞ There is a woman in Iowa possessed of extraordinary self-denial. She made a vow five years ago that she would never speak again, and has stuck to it ever since.

☞ A Kansas preacher has had his salary increased $50 a year for thrashing three men who disturbed his congregation.

☞ Mrs. Brigham Young, No. 19, has been lecturing in Denver, Col. Her subject was the wives and children of the Mormon patriarch.

☞ A baby was left on a door-step at Hallowell, Me., recently, and with due attention to its wants, beside it were placed a full supply of linen, a bottle of condensed milk and a bottle of paregoric.

☞ A Detroit woman, who had been divorced from her first husband, recently married again. The first husband, to show that he bore no malice, headed a party who serenaded the newly-married pair.

☞ It is reported that at the late laying of the corner-stone of the new capitol of Iowa, the only speech made was by a workman who got his fingers pinched.

☞ An invention is said to have been recently perfected in England by which a diver when under water is able to converse with those above.

☞ The complaint is made that, while many of the postal cards may be very good blotters, they are quite unfit to write upon.

☞ A fair damsel of Bennington, Vermont, is under arrest for beating her father, because he ventured to say that he did not approve of round dances.

☞ A modern philosopher thinks it a mistake to suppose women have stronger attachments than men. A man is often attached to an old hat; but he asks, "who ever heard of a woman being attached to an old bonnet?"

☞ The new Sultan of Morocco is said to have initiated a social revolution by refusing to have more than one wife.

☞ Some burglars broke into a store at Fall River recently, but stole nothing and left a silver pitcher behind them.

☞ Cambric handkerchiefs, with colored borders, have been introduced. Some have a colored monogram in the centre.

☞ An English journal points out a curious relation between Saturday night and infant mortality. It says that the number of infants smothered in bed by over-tired and not over-sober parents between sunset on Saturday and sunrise on Sunday, far surpasses the mortality of any other night in the week.

☞ A Covington girl lent her shawl to an invalid gentleman riding in a stage, and when he handed it back there was a $500 greenback pinned to the shawl. The girls must not suppose, however, that this will happen every time they lend their shawls to an interesting stranger.

☞ The Paris Figaro tells of a horse that was saved from death by brandy, and then became so very fond of the liquor that he would escape from the stable and go right to a saloon for more. When one day he was refused his regular drink, he smashed his way through the window and into the saloon.

☞ On a recent occasion, a Yale student was absent from recitation, and, by sad mistake, handed in two excuses therefor. One said that serious illness detained him in his room; the other asserted that he was a member of a sailing party, which had become becalmed in the bay until recitation time was past. Both facts were duly attested, but the professor was puzzled.

☞ A curious tale is related of a party of Fantee warriors, the allies of the British in the Ashantee campaign. A party were out under charge of an English lieutenant, but on the appearance of the enemy they very promptly ran away. Looking back, they saw the officer emptying his pistols at the enemy, when some of them, gathering courage, returned, and seizing their astonished commander, bore him kicking and struggling from the field. They would not fight themselves, and they were equally determined that their officer should not do so either.

☞ A BIRD'S SUICIDE.—A correspondent of the Herald of Health writes: A few years ago we were presented with a fine pair of birds (turtle ring doves), and they cooed and were as happy as doves or other beings can be when they love each other. They had several offspring, and would never trouble themselves about them after they were able to take care of themselves. So time went as merry as a marriage bell; but, alas! a few days ago the female bird got sick and died, and, would you believe it? the mate refused to take either food or drink, and when forced to take some, he would spit out whatever did not go down his throat far enough, then threw himself violently on his back, as much as to say, I will not live without my mate. We tried to pacify him by putting another bird in the cage with him—one which looked very much like the dead one—but it was of no use, he was determined to commit suicide; and after carefully feeding him, by forcing a few crumbs down his throat, we left him the fifth night only to find him in the morning lying stiff and cold on his back, precisely in the position he would throw himself into after his mate died.

The Living Telegrapher.—Symptoms are the silent characters through which the diseased body telegraphs its condition. But they are not always read aright, and the medicines administered sometimes aggravate instead of relieving the complaint. Conspicuous among the instances of malpractice which are of daily occurrence, is the habit of dosing dyspeptic and constipated invalids with powerful cathartics. HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS, in which are skilfully blended the vegetable elements best adapted to the invigoration of the stomach, and removal, without violence, of regular discharges from the bowels, should be taken twice or thrice a day as a remedy for indigestion of every type, and for costiveness, whether chronic or casual. No other medicine will be required and the cure will be rapid and painless. No medicine, as yet discovered or compounded, equals Hostetter's Bitters as a specific for all affections of the liver, as well as for diseases of the stomach, the bowels and the nerves.

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If anybody has ever used the thorough and scientific course of treatment recommended by the proprietor of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy for the cure of Catarrh and has not been perfectly cured, the proprietor, Dr. R. V. Pierce, would like to hear from that person, and by addressing him at the World's Dispensary, Buffalo, N. Y., [illegible] if there is any [illegible] he will [illegible] offers $500 in [illegible] case of Catarrh which he cannot cure, and is perfectly able to pay it if he fails in a single case, as any one may learn upon inquiry. The thorough course of treatment referred to and recommended by Dr. Pierce consists in the use of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy with Dr. Pierce's Nasal Douche which is the only means by which the fluid can be carried high up and applied to all parts of the nasal passages and the chambers connected therewith in which ulcers exist and from which the discharge proceeds. In addition to this thorough application of the Remedy, which should always be used warm, Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery should be taken earnestly as constitutional treatment, without which few cases can be cured as the disease is always constitutional and must be treated accordingly. This treatment has no unpleasant features about it, and has the advantage of never driving the disease to the lungs as there is danger of doing by the use of strong, irritating snuffs or poisonous solutions.

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THE
SATURDAY EVENING POST.

PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, JAN. 10, 1874.

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No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

1874.

OUR NEW PREMIUM CHROMO.

After examining a great variety of subjects for our new Chromo, we concluded that we could find none to equal that which we already had in the popular engraving,

"ONE OF LIFE'S HAPPY HOURS."

And as we have had repeated demands for that picture, which, owing to the wearing out of the plate, we were unable to supply, we have made arrangements with the celebrated artists, Sinclair & Co., to get us up this subject, as a Chromo, for our new Premium Chromo for our yearly subscribers for 1874.

This next year, we shall make no distinction between our *yearly subscribers*, whether they subscribe *singly or in Clubs*. EVERY YEARLY SUBSCRIBER—SINGLE OR IN A CLUB—shall be entitled to a copy of the new Chromo, by sending on ten cents extra, to pay the cost of mailing.

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One copy, (with a copy of premium Chromo),	$ 2.00
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☞ Ten cents must always be remitted for each Chromo or Engraving ordered, to pay the extra expense incurred by us for mailing, postage, etc. Or, if it is desired that the Chromo should be mounted, 25 cents must be sent for each Chromo required to be so mounted. We strongly advise having the Chromo mounted. It greatly increases its value.

Additions may be made to clubs at the same rate as the original club.

Those who design getting up clubs should commence at once, before the field is occupied by others. We offer, to say the least, as good a paper as the New York Ledger, Saturday Night, etc., and to Clubs at much lower terms, while we give a beautiful Chromo or steel engraving, in addition, and they give nothing.

Those who send on their clubs first, will have the first Chromos, of which a large edition is to be finished by the 1st of December. We trust to be able to supply all orders at once, but as on account of this offer to furnish them to club subscribers, and the well-known popularity of the picture, we expect to have an immense demand, we should advise the sending on of the clubs as early as possible.

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SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

OUR CHROMO.

We should earnestly advise our yearly subscribers to send on the 25 cents required to have their Chromos mounted on stiff card-board.

The Chromo will give so much more satisfaction, we think, when mounted on card-board, that we shall be sorry to send any out the other way. They will do very well without framing when so mounted.

And we think that, even in the case of single ones, they can be put up so that they will go through the mail with perfect safety. The post-office clerks think so, and we have found, since our last issue, that it is a general practice to send them through the mails when thus mounted.

As for the merits of the Chromo, it is one of the richest-looking we have yet seen—and we think that if our subscribers do not like it, they must be hard to please.

☞ TIME THE GREAT HEALER.—Time heals all griefs, even the bitterest, and it is well that it should be so. A long-indulged sorrow for the dead, or for any other hopeless loss, would deaden our sympathies for those still left, and thus make a sinful apathy steal over the soul, absorbing all its powers, and causing the many blessings of life to be felt as curses. As the bosom of earth blooms again and again, having buried out of sight the dead leaves of autumn, and loosed the frosty bands of winter, so does the heart—in spite of all that melancholy poets write—feel many renewed springs and summers. It is a beautiful and blessed world we live in, and, whilst life lasts, to lose the enjoyment of it is a sin.

A BEAUTIFUL THOUGHT.—When engineers would bridge a stream they often carry over a single thread. With that they stretch a wire across. Then strands are added until a foundation is laid for planks, and then the bold engineer finds safe footing—walks from side to side. So God takes from us some golden-threaded pleasure, and stretches it hence into heaven. Then he takes a child, then a friend. Thus he bridges death, and teaches the thoughts of the most timid to find their way hither and thither between the two spheres.

THE HOLIDAYS IN TOWN.

The streets and shops are gay as usual; Chestnut and Eighth streets are always crowded in fine weather at this season, much more so than is agreeable—and the gayly-dressed promenaders and zealous bargain hunters troop along as lively as ever. There is no sign of hard times except the number and variety of bargains; very inspiriting are they to ladies out in search of appropriate gifts,—not at all an easy business when much of it is to be done. Children are easily satisfied. For gentlemen there are scarfs and neckties, fur-lined gloves, sealskin-trimmed wristlets, umbrella-holders, and boxes of handkerchiefs with handsome embroidered initials. The Berlin wool-work in stripe for lounging-chairs, sofa-cushions and slippers, is really prettier every year, the flowers more exquisitely natural, the combinations of colors more enchanting. Silk is worked in with fine effect, and there is a new velvet thread, superior to worsted, giving great richness to designs for handkerchief-cases, pedestal work-baskets, and the inserted centre-piece for carved walnut racks. Ladies like to look at the ornamental bed-linen, much of it made in Germany, consisting of sheet-fold and pillow-slips, with plain hemstitched borders and initials, or heavy with beautiful and costly embroidery. Table-linen also comes with graceful and appropriate designs,—a novelty for game-suppers having around the centre-piece a circle of quails and other birds. For floral presents, the most unexceptionable and dainty sort of gifts, there are flower-pots and jardinieres of beautiful design, filled with the loveliest roses and heliotrope and fragrant violets. A slender stand holding a single stately Calla lily looks fair and choice between the lace curtains at the window; or if the place is shady, a graceful drooping fern or richly-tinted Begonia. More charming still is a larger jardiniere of elegant shape, holding a dozen kinds—creamy white and luscious red roses intermixed with smilax and ferns and sweet alyssum, the colors and forms arranged as in a choice bouquet, with a finish of dainty moss, and over the basket handle twining ivy and maurandya. A similar flower-basket filled with bulbs, low-growing tulips, hyacinths and scillas, the ground covered with moss, is unequalled for richness of coloring, fragrance and freshness. There is one house on Walnut street worth walking far to see for the rare beauty of its floral arrangements. Behind the plate glass, with folds of misty lace drooping on either side, the sweetest flowers, tastefully grouped, make its windows a study.

A few plants for winter enjoyment are easiest kept in these neat compact flower-beds for the parlor, occupying so little space. Anything that becomes unsightly should be banished to the cellar, and the jardiniere replenished and re-arranged to keep it fresh and thriving. If flowers do not flourish, try ferns of the hardier sorts, or ivy. Anything looks well that is healthy and happy.

They say that ribbons were never so cheap before, and the windows display them in all the most captivating shades of color—sky-blue and mauve to tie up the paly-gold tresses of the blonde, and rose, pink and scarlet for the chestnut braids of the dark-bright brunette. Silks, also, are very much reduced in price, and silk velvet less costly. The latter is the most becoming material possible for the vests so much worn this winter, close-fitting and sleeveless, with two pockets placed at the spring of the waist. The pattern of this does not differ from that of a shapely polonaise, cut off to the depth of a basque, left open at the hips, and trimmed around. They are a useful addition for warmth, and for giving a look of newness to a worn dress. The same purpose is answered by the pelerine collars, made of black velvet with a fraise round the throat lined with gay silk and completed with a wide tulle ruche.

Velvet belts with leather lining and silver clasps are still the favorite style, convenient for negligé costumes, and durable. The Marie Stuart cap, of velvet and lace, which many find so becoming, is much worn at present; and bows, glittering stars, and pearl arrows in the hair. Buttons for ornamenting redingotes and other garments are not so absurdly large as at first. A novelty is to embroider a star upon them, passing a needleful of floss silk through the hole to the top. Large tortoise-shell buttons, finely carved, are elegant, but too costly to be much used. Bonnets and Hats are undistinguishable at present, both being stringless. Some are very much trimmed, others plain. Feathers are preferred to flowers.

There is nothing actually new in dress materials, the financial pressure of course affecting importations. The good old French merinos and mohairs are in favor. Cheap and showy mixed fabrics have proved unsatisfactory; the silky surface wears dingy, and the dye comes off; while a beaver mohair, brilliantine or fine merino, after long wear, can still be cleaned and turned to look as well as new. Half an ounce of pulverized borax or ammonia, dissolved in a pint of warm water, will restore the freshness of mohair or alpaca. Waterproof cloth is more used than ever. A dark blue redingote and black skirt look well. Quilted petticoats of silk or satin are good for cold weather, especially if made with wool or down, when they are light as well as warm; cotton wadding makes them heavy.

There is a passion for fur trimmings this winter. A band of fur around the neck and down each front trims a redingote; and English walking-jackets of cloth that in the autumn were trimmed with silk, look pretty now bordered with fur. The usual set consists of a muff and collar or boa, but these last are not to be recommended; there is so much risk of taking cold from overheating the neck and chest. Many physicians have a standing testimony against these articles of ladies' attire, their experience showing the serious injury so liable to result from the use of them.

This holiday season is saddened for a very wide circle of friends by the death of Professor Agassiz. Who is there to take his place? Scientific men are not wanting, but he stood apart and alone—a devotee of science, single-hearted, purely disinterested. It was characteristic of the man when he replied to a money-making scheme, "I have no time to make money;" and again when he declined indignantly a proposition to write a book on natural history for use in schools. The large pecuniary inducement was no temptation to him. "I wrote them," said he, "that I was not the man to do this sort of work. And I told them too, that the less of this work was done, the better. It is not school-books that we want, it is students. The book of nature is always open. All that I can write and say shall be to make them study that book and not pin their faith to any other."

It was only the past summer that his noble beginning was made to put these true and much-needed ideas into practice. If he could have carried on for a few years longer the school so well begun, what a gain to America, to the world! He was but sixty-four; ten years, even twenty years of life might not unreasonably have been hoped for; but it was probably the common story of overwork. Living for science, he labored incessantly at one great undertaking after another. Now, in the very midst of his work—the full ripeness of his powers, he is called away. Yet it can hardly be said that the scientific world has lost its leader. The name and spirit of Agassiz remain a presence and a power still.

The prominent event of these holidays in Philadelphia—the great "Tea Party," preparatory to the greater centennial of 1876—who has not heard of it? By this time the daily papers have spread its report far and wide over the country. The flag-draped and flower-decorated rooms, the fair ladies in picturesque Martha Washington costume, the speeches, the toasts, the cups of tea and the music—it was certainly a brilliant success. But the crowd! When we look forward to the coming of all the world to our grand Centennial, it is a relief to think of spacious, beautiful Faire-Mount.

B. P.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

A LITERARY HACK.

A number of good people whom I don't know have been writing letters to me lately. Most of these good people are young ladies, very nice, jolly girls, I judge. Now, it's a little queer, maybe, but all these letters of these jolly good girls are written about one and the same subject. You wouldn't think it, but it's so. These young ladies all want to enter the broad, boundless and enchanting field of literature. They wish to become newspaper correspondents.

That's a subject on which I have "views."

The letters of these young ladies all have one main point, about which everything else revolves. The young ladies want that I should tell them how to write for newspapers in such a way as to make it *pay*. That's their main point. (I haven't been a distinguished success myself, as far as that's concerned.) They don't say they would like to write in such a way that it will do people good to read what they write. They don't say that they have a particular ambition to endeavor by their writings to cultivate the taste and enlarge the knowledge of both themselves and their readers. No more do they confess that they are afflicted with a burning and unquenchable thirst to acquire for themselves a name and a fame which shall echo down the corridors of time. Not a corridor. Every blessed mother's daughter of 'em wants to write in order to earn money. They want to begin and earn money right off. That's the little peculiarity of 'em.

It isn't so much fun to be a writist.

I hereby desire to answer all these young ladies in the lump—a sweet big lump of young ladies. If I shall exaggerate a little, or scold overmuch, or make overmuch out of nothing, I ask their pardon, at the same time they needn't be surprised at it. It is a constitutional infirmity of mine to see things by either a very strong or a very feeble light, as the case may be. I am everlastingly tilting up or down. When I'm happy, I'm very happy, thank you, and when I'm miserable, I'm *very* miserable, thank you. If a thing is true, it always seems to me so very true; if, on the other hand, I think it is a lie, it always seems to me such an awful whopper. I suppose that peculiarity is the inborn failing of all womankind. They are always in the superlative degree; always so very exceedingly this, that or the other. The name termagant was formerly applied to men as well as to women, both alike, but the women out-scolded the men so greatly and so far, that in time the hard word was dropped entirely as a title of the masculine gender, and applied only to women. That's a pretty comment on our sex, but it's a fact. I never keep back facts. I try to swallow 'em all. I shall die trying to swallow a fact some day—I came near choking on one not long ago.

So, confessing in the beginning my infirmity to intensify things, I will do my best at answering the jolly nice girls who have written to me. First as to the matter which appears to these young ladies the most important—namely, will it pay? Lately I read somewhere in a newspaper that the head cook of a certain fashionable club is paid seven thousand dollars a year for his services, and doesn't touch his hand to work himself. Now, not many newspaper editors or writers get more than half of that. The fact needs no comment. It's a sufficient comment in itself. If you want to make your fortune in this world, don't go to feeding people's brains. Gracious, no! Go to work on their stomachs at once, and you'll be sure to hit it. The person who could invent a new and delicious dish to eat, would have his fortune in his hand. His fortune would lie in other people's stomachs. He would be a millionaire in five years, would the man who invented a new dish wherewith to feed people's stomachs. On the other hand, I don't suppose there ever was a literary man on earth who was worth a million dollars, or the half of it. Publishers have grown fat and rich, sometimes, but not many authors.

It is possible for the successful literary drudge to make, in time, a respectable and comfortable living at the trade. But I give you my word of honor that it's harder to succeed in than anything else in life, except going to Heaven. I rather think that's harder, and come to think, I don't know whether even that is much harder. Just about one young lady of eleven hundred who attempt literature has the pluck and the hang-on to keep trying and doing her best till she gains the ear of some kind editor that thinks her work is worth paying for. (Editors are not flinty-hearted fossils, after you get the hang of 'em.) The chief trouble with the young ladies of these days is laziness, next after their love of dress, perhaps. I know a young lady who gave up a fine education and the diploma of a graduate, just because, forsooth! she couldn't dress as finely as some of the other girls! Poor fool! I tell you I'd have held on to that golden opportunity if I'd had to wear cow-skin boots laced up with tow strings. So I would. The nice girls who have written to me don't know, I think, how much time and work and self-denial it takes to earn one's living at scribbling. Any one of them is competent to do it, as far as natural brains is concerned. They all seem real bright, and if any one of 'em is prepared to give up for a time most of the things which young ladies think absolutely necessary to their happiness, and work and study faithfully for a few years, there isn't the shadow of a doubt in my mind but that young lady would make a successful literary drudge; that is to say, a successful newspaper correspondent. But I doubt whether any of them will ever do it.

Likewise, after all is said and done, and success really won, there is always one reflection which must be a continually painful and humiliating thought to the literary hack. The highest literature is not that which is bought and paid for by the piece, as one would order a wash-stand, or a dining-table, cut out and made per direction. Indeed, so true is it that literature, pursued as a trade by which to win bread and butter, is not productive of the very highest literary results, that the lamented late John Stuart Mill decidedly disapproved of literary drudgery for those who wished to study literature as a science, and tread the lofty paths of philosophy. For those who loved literature for literature's sake, he thought it was not well to use literature as a bread-winner. To all such, who had their living to earn besides, he recommended getting a government clerkship, which didn't require any thought or much time; and then they could spend the other hours in their beloved literary studies.

It is as true as this world stands, that he who would work out a lofty and noble idea, no matter what, must separate himself forever from all thought of money-getting. A lofty idea won't bring in money. Shakespeare, Goethe, Schiller, and John Stuart Mill were all great lights in literature, and every one of them died a poor man. The literature which lasts is the literature most poorly paid at the time. The great Agassiz, who has just died, confessedly one of the most eminent scientific men in the world, was entreated to make a lecturing tour, being told as an inducement that he could soon make himself rich thereby.

"I have not time to become rich," said Agassiz.

The literary bread-winner, "bread-artist," they call it in German, must grind on and on forever, like a blind horse on a tread-mill. If the blind horse stops for a day, then just so long the tread-mill stops, likewise the bread and butter which comes by that turning of the tread-mill. Your literary bread-winner may feel that he could write something better and worthier, if he had more time. But no! He has no time. Just so much is required of him every day, right or wrong, fair or foul, and the blind horse must grind on, no matter how worthless the grist he grinds out, else the blind horse's children and wife will be howling for their bread and butter. He never has time to do his best, poor wretch! So many pages stand to him for just so much ham and cheese, and the more pages, the more ham and cheese. Instead of being filled with a brave aspiration to write something worthy, something which will last while our mother-tongue lasts, and which will do human hearts good when they read it, we literary hacks are apt to sink down into mere writing-machines, with no ambition—God help us! save to get the utmost possible money to the page. Heaven knows it is a painfully humiliating thing to confess, yet it is forced upon us by the nature of the case. We can't help it.

Again: The literary hack must trim his sails to the popular breezes. Popular breezes may be a donkey, but your literary bread-winner must sail with them all the same. That's the sorrowfullest, dreariest part of it. He may start out on his career full of high resolve and lofty ambition to write forever only that which is pure and brave and true, to spend his mortal life in a Sir Galahad quest after the Holy Grail of truth. What then? If the multitude on whom he depends for his bread prefer error to his truth, tell me, what can the poor fellow do, even though he be one of the few successful literary hacks? He must pander more or less to popular taste, even when popular taste is on the wrong side, and even though he bitterly despises himself for doing it. It is almost morally impossible for him to live up to his high resolves and pure aspirations. A few do it; most of them don't.

So it is but a sorry life.

And yet all this won't discourage any young lady who feels in her bones that she is to be a newspaper scribbler. I should be sorry if it did, on the whole. Any young lady whose spirit is full of the true enthusiasm and the clear grit,—if she made up her mind to it,—would go on and be a "writist," though an army of mad dogs howled at her. And I should be proud of her for her pluck, if she did. Finally, speaking of the matter of writing, I am reminded of this passage in a big Injun's speech, which I read once:

"The Great Spirit talks, we hear him in the thunder, in the rushing winds and the mighty waters—*but he never writes.*"

ZIG.

How to Talk Soft Nonsense to Ladies.

BY DAISY BURNS.

I was somewhat amused in reading over the column of "Answers to Correspondents" some time ago. I generally read that first; sometimes I learn a good deal, and sometimes I laugh a good deal. That which rather amused me though, was the inquiry of one of Kansas' noble sons, "How to talk soft nonsense to the fair sex?" I wonder what soft nonsense is! Perhaps a conversation I chanced to hear not a great while ago might be classed as such. It was at a county fair, and indeed they are great places to hear nonsense. I was sitting with my friends near the promenade portion of the amphitheatre watching the bright faces of the girls, when a beau chanced to offer his arm; and now and then I caught a glimpse of a gallant who was pouring forth his "soft nonsense" to his fair companion, while at the same time we saw a gloved hand slip behind him, catch the coat-tail or sleeve of some unengaged gallant, and jerk, jerk with a vengeance, which plainly said to us lookers-on, "A kingdom, oh, a kingdom" for relief!

While I was thus occupied I heard a voice say behind me, "What horse are you betting on, John?" You see the ring was full of fine horses just then.

"On the gray," said John.

"Wal, I'll bet on the black," said the lady.

"I'll tell you, Sal," said John, "I'll bet you a sweetheart agin a sweetheart." The bet was taken, and they awaited the decision. At last the blue ribbon was tied on the gray.

"Now, Sal," said John, "I want my sweetheart."

"He, he, he," laughed Sal, "who do you want, John?"

John bent his head, and we heard a gruff voice, which I've no doubt had much sweetness to Sal, answer, "You, Sal, you. What do you say, Sal, can I have that one?"

"He, he, he! well, yes, John."

"Then, Sal, I'm all settin' up; but now, Sal, you've not got to take on with no other feller."

"Lawa, John, I don't want to take on with anybody but you."

"I don't believe you care anything for me, Sal."

"You don't know what I care for you, John; but you don't care nothing for me."

"Yes I do tho', Sal. I love you as hard as a horse loves corn." Here Sal gave another he, he, he! She told John he was joking, but he said he was plum in earnest, and told her if she'd take another round with him he'd tell her something, and Sal went, but before they left he asked Sal if he might go home with her. She told him he might go "as far as the stile blocks, but pop didn't like for fellers to be hankerin' round her."

This conversation is truth, word for word. Was that soft nonsense?

There was another couple that attracted my attention somewhat. He wore his hat on the side of his head, supported a cream-colored mustache, twirled a cane, wore kid gloves, and wafted a strong scent of musk wherever he went. She was all frizzes and curls, with a calico dress made with train, overskirt, basque and cape. They were not so unsophisticated as the former couple, however, nor so much in love. Both seemed to be much exercised over the weather. Said the gentleman:

"We're going to have rain."

"Do you think so?" asked the lady.

"If we don't, we'll have a long dry spell."

That very original speech passed for wit, and both laughed.

"Oh, I don't think it will rain," she said.

"Twould be bad if it did, wouldn't it?"

"Yes," she said, "for we'd all get wet. Do you really think it will rain?"

"I'm almost certain. See those heavy clouds."

"Oh, I hate rain, it gives me the blues. Doesn't it you?"

And the last I heard of that couple, they were still discussing the weather.

If our Kansas friend wants to learn how to talk soft nonsense, let him attend the county fairs in the fall.

MARGUERITE.

I pluck the petals one by one—
They fall upon the daisied plot;
I sing for every petal gone,
He loves me, or he loves me not.

I pluck them, anxious, one by one.
Are all the sweet old vows forgot?
Is all my heart's long strength undone?
He loves me, or he loves me not.

But as my task is well-nigh done,
A voice rings through the quiet spot,
Betwixt the shadow and the sun,
"Why fear that I should love you not?"

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—It is now, we believe, definitely settled that the Briggses will have to move away from their house next door to Biggses. Mrs. Bigg went down to Salem to spend a week, a short time ago, and she wrote a letter home to her husband, which she directed to their residence. Of course the stupid postman left the epistle at the house of Briggs; and Mrs. B. seeing a letter written by a woman, directed, as she supposed to her husband, was immediately on fire with jealousy and curiosity. She determined to open it. It began with "My dearest," and ended with "Your loving Amelia." One of the sentences contained this information: "I must tell you, darling, that I wore the diamonds you gave me, to church on Sunday, and they were universally admired." When Mrs. Briggs had read all this, she uttered a fearful scream and fainted away. Upon reviving, she put the letter in her pocket and determined to leave the house forever. She packed her trunk, and put on her bonnet, and then, as it was nearly time for Briggs to come home, she concluded to wait and have it out with him. When he came in the front-door she was sitting on the stairs with her umbrella in her hand and her trunk in the entry all ready *to go*. His first remark was—

"Going anywhere, Maria?"

But she sat silent and glared gloomily at him. Then he saw something was wrong, and he advanced and tried to kiss her in order to get her confidence. But she rose and prodding his ribs fiercely with her umbrella, she exclaimed—

"Don't come near me, you monster. Go to your Amelia—yes, to your Amelia! ha, ha! yes, go to her!"

"Why, Maria, what is the meaning of this extraordinary conduct?"

"Don't talk to me, sir! Go and talk to your Amelia, your *darling* Amelia! Go and buy her more diamonds—and waste millions on her, while your wife and children starve; yes, you wretch—starve!"

"Maria, this is very singular behavior. What are you talking about?"

"You know well enough, you villain. But I'll tell you again. I've got hold of one of Amelia's letters!! I've found you out. Now I know where all your money goes to! It's infamous—utterly infamous." And Mrs. Briggs went into a fit of hysterics, with her head against the banister. Briggs picked up the letter and read it. Then he said—

"Upon my word, Maria, you are making a very great deal of fuss about a very small matter."

"How dare you insult me, you brute! Do you call it a small matter to be sending diamonds to that woman, and to have her write you scandalous letters, in which she calls you 'her darling?' Oh, it's infamous!"

"The letter isn't for me. It's for Biggs. It is from his wife, you don't know what you're talking about."

Then Mrs. Briggs, after examining the letter again, flew into Brigg's arms and cried some more. Then he carried her trunk up-stairs for her, and she took off her things and sat down to reflect upon the fact that she had made a fool of herself. Since then Biggs has sued Briggs for opening his letters, and the latter will have a narrow escape if he misses going to the penitentiary.

—Mr. Maginnis took Miss Jones riding in a buggy one day last week, and when they were four or five miles out of town something about the swingle-tree got loose. Maginnis took the horse from the shafts and hitched him to the fence, and then Maginnis proceeded to repair the break. When it was fixed he brought the horse back and tried to hitch him to the wagon, but as Maginnis would sidle the animal up to the shafts, the horse would step over them and get out on the other side. Then it would swing around a circle and just as Maginnis thought he had the steed in the shafts it would step over again, and again make a complete revolution, Maginnis meantime holding the bridle and uttering various equine exclamations. After doing this a dozen or two times, Maginnis asked Miss Jones to hold up the shafts while he backed the horse into them. She did so, and the animal was at last in position; but just as Maginnis let go of the bridle, so that he could go back and fasten the traces, the horse started off, and Maginnis chased it half a mile before he caught it. Then, when Maginnis tried again to back the animal into the shafts, it turned around until it got to the right place, when it would suddenly revolve in the opposite direction, then back again, and so on. Maginnis then asked Miss Jones to hold up the shafts once more; and he got the horse fairly between them again. He held on to the reins this time when he went back to fasten the traces, but the horse started suddenly, threw Maginnis to the ground, and pulled the reins from his hand. The animal went down the road at full gallop, and Maginnis and Miss Jones had to walk home. When they got to the stable the horse was there, but upon sending out for the buggy they discovered that it was stolen, and Maginnis had to pay for it. The next time he asks Miss Jones to ride they will go in a horse car.

—They had some trouble at Chubb's, on Christmas, about their mince pies. Mrs. Chubb made her sausage meat and her mince meat at the same time; but, by some unaccountable blunder, the hired girl poured the cider over the sausage meat and packed it into the mince meat buckets, while she kept the mince meat dry and put it in the sausage kettles. On Christmas day Mrs. Chubb made several mince pies, and they were served up hot to the company which she had invited to dinner. When the pie was helped, the guests each took a mouthful, but instantly one spit his out in his hand, another smuggled his from his mouth to his napkin, while another gulped it down with tears in his eyes. Presently Chubb himself took a bite, and after ejecting it he roared, "Gracious! Louisa, what on earth have you put in them pies?" Mrs. Chubb said there was nothing the matter with the pies, and then she put a piece in her mouth. She was instantly converted, and she started out to interview that hired girl. No satisfaction could be obtained from her, although Mrs. Chubb did entertain a suspicion that the domestic was trying to poison the family. She postponed further investigation until the next day when the company would be gone. That night they had fried sausage for supper. And the guests took exactly one mouthful apiece of that. When Chubb began to nibble at it, he shouted, "Immortal Moses! Louisa, what on this earth is the matter with the vittals in this house? That sausage is sickenin' sweet." Mrs. Chubb was alarmed, and cutting open a sausage she examined it and found some raisins and currants in it. Then she suddenly rose and darted for the kitchen, and in a few moments a hired girl might have been seen emerging from Chubb's house for the purpose of seeking an intelligence office. Mrs. Chubb remarked the next day during an interview with Mrs. Briggs that "there'll never be no peace in this land until there is no law agin' murderin' servant girls."

—A family named Kemper moved into a house in our row last week, and Benjamin P. Gunn, the life-insurance agent, who lives in the same row, was the first caller. He dropped in to see if he couldn't take out a policy for Mr. Kemper. Mrs. Kemper came down to the parlor to see him.

"I suppose," said Gunn, "Mr. Kemper has no insurance on his life."

"No," said Mrs. Kemper.

"Well, I'd like to get him to take a policy in our company. It's the safest in the world; the largest capital, smallest rates, and biggest dividends."

"Mr. Kemper don't take much interest in such things now," said Mrs. K.

"Well, madam, but he ought to, in common justice to you. No man knows when he will die, and by paying a ridiculously small sum now, Mr. Kemper can leave his family in affluence. I'd like to hand you, for him, a few pamphlets containing statistics upon the subject; may I?"

"Of course, if you wish to."

"Don't you think he can be induced to insure?" asked Gunn.

"I hardly think so," replied Mrs. Kemper.

"He is in good health, I suppose? Has he complained lately of being sick?"

"Not lately."

"May I ask if he has any considerable wealth?"

"Not a cent."

"Then of course he must insure. No poor man can afford to neglect such an opportunity. I suppose he travels sometimes; goes about in railroad cars and other dangerous places?"

"No, he keeps very quiet."

"Man of steady habits, I s'pose?"

"Very steady."

"He is the very man I want," said Gunn. "I know I can sell him a policy."

"I don't think you can," replied Mrs. Kemper.

"Why? When will he be home? I'll call on him. I don't know of any reason why I shouldn't insure him."

"I know," replied Mrs. K.

"Why?"

"He *has been dead twenty-seven years!*" said the widow.

Then Gunn left all of a sudden. He will not insure any of the Kempers.

—Chubb's clock got out of order the other day and began to strike wrong. That was the cause of the fearful excitement at his house on Wednesday night. They were all in bed sound asleep at midnight, when the clock suddenly struck *five*. The new hired girl, happening to wake just as it began, heard it and bounced out of bed, under the impression that morning had come. And as it is as dark at 5 A. M. just at this season as at midnight, she did not perceive her mistake, but went down into the kitchen and began to get breakfast. While she was bustling about in a pretty lively manner, Chubb happened to wake, and he heard the noise. He opened his room door cautiously, and crept softly to the head of the stairs to listen. He could distinctly hear some one moving about the kitchen and dining-room, and apparently packing up the china. Accordingly he went back to his room and woke Mrs. Chubb, and gave her orders to spring the rattle out of the front window the moment she heard his gun go off. Then Chubb seized his fowling-piece, and going down to the dining-room door, where he could hear the burglars at work, he cocked the gun, aimed it, pushed the door open with the muzzle and fired. Instantly Mrs. Chubb sprang the rattle, and before Chubb could pick up the lacerated hired girl the front door was burst open by two policemen, who came into the dining-room. Seeing Chubb with a gun, and a bleeding woman on the floor, they imagined that murder had been committed, and one of them trotted Chubb off to the station-house while the other remained to investigate things. Just then the clock struck six. An explanation ensued from the girl, who only had a few bird-shot in her leg, and the policeman left to bring Chubb home. He arrived at about three in the morning, just as the clock was striking eight. When the situation was unfolded to him his first action was to jam the butt of his gun through the clock, whereupon it immediately struck two hundred and forty-three, and then Chubb pitched it over the fence. He has a new clock now, and things are working better.

1874. 1874.

OUR OPENING STORIES

FOR

THE NEW YEAR.

We shall begin in next week's paper (No. 25), a fascinating novelet of English life entitled

THE

GHOST OF NORMAN PARK;

OR,

TWO WOMEN WRONGED.

BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD;

to be followed by the thrilling romance of Northern and of Tropical life—

THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

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Also, by a new story from the pen of BURR THORNBURY, whose late work, "JESSIE DALE, *The Conductor's Daughter*," excited much interest by its strange plot and striking incidents. His new serial will be entitled

HARD TIMES;

OR,

THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873—74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., also will be of the highest character.

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XXXII.

SHOOTING AT A MARK.

Were Earle Templeton's cynicism and obduracy of temperament melted away by this one tender, passionate episode?

Alas! no. The bulwarks were heaped higher than ever against every inroad of feeling; and if he had seemed a statue of bronze before, he was hardened into cast-iron now. Yet, to outsiders, the transformation did not appear at once; nor could it have been attributed to any especial causes by them.

In that house at Coldham, from which, like Pandora's box, so many evils had seemed to emanate, hot, passionate tears may have scalded his haggard face, and been visible to human eyes; but now, if known at all, they dried upon his heart and left their blister there.

To James Barrycourt, who had seen him an hour before Horace Eglinston had appeared to summon him to the death-bed scene that must live in his memory forever, he seemed the same steady-nerved, strong-thinking reasoner, when the former called at his office, the next morning at ten o'clock, to consult him upon a knotted question at law.

His opinion—the correct one, as it proved to be—was given at once; and Barrycourt returned his thanks.

"No sort of dissipation the previous night seems to render you muddled in the morning—as it does every one else," said the latter, "and yet I would wager, from the circles around your eyes, that you were playing écarte last night, until the day dawned."

"No;" answered Templeton, as he went on arranging some papers, "I did not play at all."

A few days later, Barrycourt informed him that he expected to be married very soon, and desired him to be one of his attendants.

"'Et tu, Brute,'" said Templeton, with a smile. "I had counted on you as a club-room associate for years to come."

"Rather let me hope that my own example may prove contagious," replied his friend. "And that I may soon wish you happiness in your own domestic circle."

"No. When I take you to the altar, I shall bid you a final good-bye, old fellow."

"How strange it is that you have never loved," said Barrycourt, innocently.

"Do you think so?" replied the other, quietly. "Well, you see, my dear Barrycourt, the world is made up of all sorts of people."

"Yes, I have been told so—though for my own part, I have always held the particles of aggregate humanity not so very different after all, except as we shape our own destinies. But do you know, Templeton, I have always imagined, that were you to love once it would be with a passion little short of idolatry—that you would never forget; and that you could hate with equal intensity where your animosity was provoked?"

"Perhaps you have not read me amiss," replied Templeton, thoughtfully.

"Then let a mis-tress finish it," answered Barrycourt, laughing. "Do you never expect to marry?"

"I?" said Templeton, with a start. And he added hastily—"never!"

"Then you do not believe a man is happier, married?" asked the other.

"You would be—yes. And I think the generality of men, or the institution would not have been handed down from our first parents," he replied with a smile. "But my own life has been peculiar—perhaps exceptional, and—we will, if you please, Barrycourt, have a glass of ale."

"Which means," thought the other, with a sigh, as he followed him into a saloon, "that the subject must be dropped. Well, 'le roi le veut,' so amen!"

And it was never renewed.

Templeton was at Barrycourt's marriage, and "stood" with a pretty, rosy-cheeked girl. He had affirmed in the beginning, that he rather avoided such things generally, but his friend had appeared hurt, and he had given over.

"Such a love of a man!" the young ladies had all cried; "he is as cold as ice, and as polished." And they had crowded around Barrycourt to know what the experiences of the other had been in the affairs of the heart. While he, smiling and amused, had inimitable graces and innumerable "jeux d'esprits" for each; and when, at a late hour, he took his departure, they murmured regretfully behind their fans, "so soon!" while he, turning toward his rooms, along the quiet streets, exclaimed, with an audible sigh of relief, "at last!"

When the honeymoon was over, Barrycourt sought his friend again. He could not give him up still. The man had drawn him, as he did the majority of persons, with a powerful mesmerism.

He began, however, to miss Templeton oftener and oftener; and frequently he had looked for him through all their old favorite haunts in vain.

"Where do you hide yourself?" he asked, one evening when he returned a second time to his office to find him there, after a long search.

"'Quid est tui!'" the other had quoted, evasively. "The foxes have holes, and the swallows nests. I did not expect to see you, my dear Barrycourt; and one must seek diversion somewhere."

One evening later, Barrycourt was never more astounded than when he stumbled by the merest chance, upon Earle Templeton in an obscure shooting-gallery, firing industriously at a mark fifty yards distant.

"In the name of all that is rational, what are you doing?" was the astonished question.

"Shooting at a mark, as you see," replied Templeton, coolly. "There is nothing, my dear James, which we do at all, that should not be done to the very best of our ability."

"I was not aware that you courted the favor of Mars, as well as Minerva," answered the other. "But, pray, how often would you expect to hit that?"

"Come," replied Templeton. "You know six months ago you won the prize, as the best shot of our circle. Let us measure our skill against each other now."

Barrycourt took the pistol from his hand.

"I think I can strike it—even at that distance—once in half a dozen times, if my hand has not lost its cunning."

He commenced to fire—one! two! three! four! The fifth was in a hair's breadth; and, true to his word, the sixth pierced the blank. He returned the pistol to Templeton with a smile.

The first shot of the latter missed—as Barrycourt's fifth had done; the remaining five went direct to the mark each time.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed his friend, in astonished admiration. "In all my experience I have never seen anything like that. Whatever you engage in, you must excel all other men."

"Except in 'the affairs of the heart,' you know," replied Templeton, with one of his cold, repellant smiles. "So you think I have attained more than average skilfulness here?"

"I tell you nothing ever surpassed it. One would think you had been practicing here for some trial of skill upon which your life depended."

"You think so?" responded Templeton. "Well, after all, who knows? Perhaps it may."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE EXILES AT NAPLES.

Our readers must imagine themselves looking out on the world-renowned bay of Naples, with its hundreds of flotillas, filled with gay pleasure-seekers, apparently without a thought in the world save those afforded by the passing moment, while here and there were to be seen all along the coast the rougher barges of the drowsy, indolent fishermen.

The city itself slept in the distance. Indeed everything around wore a semi-somnolent appearance. The streets were crowded with foot-passengers and pleasure carriages, but each and all wore a lazy, self-satisfied look. No one jostled another. Nobody was ever in a hurry here. Care should not be paraded in public by one, no matter how darkly it might lie in the closet at home to scare away the joy of another. Let peace reign upon the countenance, though the mantle should conceal a hostile stiletto.

It is in Naples, of all the world, that one realizes his idea of a life of luxury. Here the hardest laborer from abroad falls readily into the "dolce far niente" of the Italians.

On the beach, this evening, strolled an erect military man of sixty, with some scars, and several insignia of rank; and a pretty, dark-eyed woman, perhaps of three-and-twenty.

They were both English—you could tell that at a glance—and when they spoke to each other—though that was not often—it was generally in their mother tongue. The man wore a look of easy complacency, as if he were entirely satisfied with everything about him. The woman, on the other hand, had sometimes a dreamily thoughtful, if not melancholy expression.

They were General Charles Ransom and lady.

The general was an old soldier in her majesty's service of considerable means—but recently married; and with an indefinite leave of absence from the army.

The lady was known to the reader, not a year ago, as Miss Violette Worthington.

The old soldier had met and loved her in the new home to which she had been taken after our last meeting. He had wooed and taken her unquestioningly as his wife. And she had determined to repay him with a life of unquestioned fidelity.

The tread of horses' hoofs was heard behind them, and soon after a carriage drove slowly by.

"Charles," said Mrs. Ransom, turning suddenly to her husband, "can you tell me who they are?"

"Where?" asked the general, aroused somewhat, and glancing around.

"Why there, of course, in that softly-cushioned vettura before us! It seems to me that I have seen them both—the old gentleman with the sad but pompous air, and the pale, beautiful invalid. They are out driving every day; yet she never seems to grow better. Who are they?"

"Ah!" replied her husband, "I had intended presenting you to them some days ago. They have passed a year or so of their lives in England—were there, I think, about the time you left; and are Spanish by birth. The gentleman is Don Juan d'Alvarez, and he has brought his beautiful daughter to Naples for her health."

"Ah! Then I have seen her!"

The quick start and earnest manner were unobserved by the general, as he continued:—

"They do say that while in our country she became involved in a love scrape with some young man of brilliant talents but comparative obscurity, whom her father and brother could not think of permitting her to marry; and that she is dying of a broken heart in consequence."

"Poor lady. I had heard the story—all but the melancholy sequel," answered Mrs. Ransom, with a sigh.

"But, my dear," said the general, "it strikes me that these broken hearts are like a broken collar-bone, for instance, easily set and grown together if they are properly managed."

"I have heard of the former that would defy all the palliatives in the pharmacopœia of surgeons," she answered, with a sigh; "or if outwardly healed and set to work again, they sometimes pain intensely to the end of life. If possible, however, Charles, I should be glad to meet these people."

"It is a courtesy I owe him," replied the general. "Alvarez and I are quite good friends."

And that very evening, so cleverly does a woman manœuvre a way when she wills it shall be, Juan Alvarez was bowing low over the hand of Mrs. Charles Ransom, in the hotel of the latter.

"My daughter—dear child," he said tenderly, "has an especial love for all the English. She will be glad to see you, madame, at our villa."

A day or so later and Mrs. Ransom had found her way to the sick girl's chamber.

Never had the beauty of Nina Alvarez struck her more forcibly than now, when she lay all unadorned, with her golden hair trailing over the face of her pillows like molten gold, and the rose-colored draperies of her chamber casting a faintly reflected glow upon her pure white face.

"No wonder he loved her," she thought, with a sigh. "Yet here a false pride of blood must interfere to separate these two, in every respect so fitted for each other; for if nature has any grades in rank, Earle Templeton was born a king."

Nina Alvarez talked but little during this first visit. She lay a greater portion of the time with clasped hands, not listening to those about her, as Violette Ransom plainly saw; but with thoughts far away from all present surroundings.

"You will have to make an effort to arouse her," said the anxious father; "she always relapses into that comatose state unless you are speaking directly to her."

On the next occasion Mrs. Ransom did arouse her to a startled, alarming interest.

"Miss Alvarez," she said, softly, "you do not know how your face haunted me here, until I ascertained your name, and then I knew that I had seen you before. You could not have been in N——, in England, without attracting a great deal of attention."

The dark eyes of the Spanish girl opened to their fullest extent, and for the first time she looked her visitor inquisitively in the face.

"And you saw me there?" she asked, with a half gasp.

"Yes."

"Ah! I see. How could I forget you! You are Violette Worthington."

"No longer Violette Worthington," she answered, with a smile, half of gratification, half of regret. "I am now married to General Charles Ransom, who has the honor of an acquaintance with your father."

Nina Alvarez had half averted her face.

"I know some of your friends in N——," pursued Mrs. Ransom, resolutely.

"Hush!" said the sick girl, flushing painfully; "I can't stand it yet; I had no friend there."

"You have done yourself and others a gross injustice," replied her visitor, unflinchingly. "There was one who would have died to serve you."

"I never knew that one," returned Nina, with a choking sob.

"Hush! Listen to me," said Mrs. Ransom, quickly. "I, also, would be a friend to you. You did know the one to whom I alluded, and his name was——"

"Ah! why are you here to torment me! Do you not see what your work has already done? You will surely spare me now."

"I wound again to heal the old fester. The name you did not let me finish was Earle Templeton. It should pain me more to say it than you to hear, for he did love you."

"Ah! he was false to all, I see," sobbed the invalid.

"False to none," replied Violette, with proud energy. "I was weak enough to love him, because no woman with disengaged affections could see him often and not do that; but as heaven is my judge, he never loved me, or professed to do so. You have been cruelly deceived. He had given you his whole heart, and you alone."

"Ah," cried Nina, "you will kill me! Did I not see with my own eyes!"

"I know," replied the other, "yet it was still a mistake."

"How?" exclaimed Nina, with rising indignation. "You will compel me to speak! Maddened with jealousy, yet instigated by a faint hope, in spite of the most convincing evidence, did I not look down on you, in person, from another door, when you emerged from his, after a clandestine interview?"

"And I protest to you, by my hopes in this life, and as I would pray for mercy in that to come, that he was innocent," returned Violette, passionately. "It was all the cruel plot of the villains who had falsely enticed you there, that they might thwart him in his dearest hopes." And she explained to her astonished listener every circumstance of the forged note; the marvellous imitation of writing, and Templeton's dumbfounded amazement and speedy dismissal of her when she appeared.

"Then," cried Nina, eagerly, and she drew from her bosom the crumpled sheet of paper that had been sent to her as an intercepted communication from Templeton to the woman before her, "you will tell me that he never spoke to you of this—never wrote this to you?" and she gave it into Mrs. Ransom's hands. "I have kept it by me day and night" she wailed, "that I might have constantly present proofs of his treachery, and might the better strive to forget him; but it has been all in vain—all in vain!"

"Because," answered Violette, looking the other resolutely in the face, "you have been cherishing a monstrous falsehood. Earle Templeton never wrote that, for the simple reason, if for no other, that he was too coldly reticent about his own matters to do so. Ah, the vengeance sworn against him has indeed been bitterly wreaked."

Yes, bitterly, oh, Earle Templeton! But the lees of the wine-cup have not yet been drained! Trusting in no strength but your own; gloomily wrapped in the grandeur of your own egotism; saying, almost defiantly, "I am sufficient unto myself," you have invoked the storm, and must endure its fury. "Tibi seris, tibi metis." Late at night, when all the house was hushed, with her arms about the neck of her father, who had loved and pitied her with more than an ordinary tenderness, Nina Alvarez told him the true story of the foul wrong in which they had each unconsciously borne a part.

Day by day the vital spark of life faded more and more wan, and the watchers knew that the end was not far off now.

Sebastian Alvarez had left his young bride in her distant home, and come quickly in answer to his father's summons, for he too loved this beautiful sister with all the ardor of his fiery, passionate nature.

"Papa and darling brother," she whispered one still evening as they sat beside her with tears in voice and look. "I have a last favor to ask now, that I know you will not refuse. It is only a matter of days with me now, but oh, I should so like to see him once before I go! It can do no harm, as you see. Think, both of you, and then answer me."

Sebastian Alvarez buried his face in his hands for a moment, and his frame shook as with some violent effort to subdue or command himself. Then, after a little, he looked up at his father.

"She is right," he said. "Let it be done."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ANOTHER SUMMONS.

If anything could have surprised Earle Templeton, the letter which he received from Juan Alvarez would have done so.

He had heard nothing of the exiles since their departure from England, and now a communication lay before him, entreating, yes, humbly entreating, that he would, at least, for a time overlook the injustice that had been done him, and respond to the prayers of a dying woman by hastening in person to bid her a last farewell.

"That is truly a wise adage in his language which says, 'Ben vienes, si vienes solo,'" said Earle Templeton, bitterly. "Welcome, misfortune, if thou comest alone! but for me, the trying ordeals of life seem always two-fold. Am I stronger to bear, or am I doubly-accursed."

There was no hesitation for him. She had been true, whatever might be said of others. Her broken heart too fatally proved this, and he owed her at least the recompense which she had asked.

To start on the journey was the matter of a few hours, with one of his ready decision and quick movements.

Travelling day and night, at last he was driving through the streets of the Italian city. No one could have told that he had not been "born a Roman," raised and nurtured here, so "native and to the manor" did he seem. He spoke the language with fluency, and at once obtained rooms and refreshments; and the dust of travel brushed from his person, he dispatched a messenger to Don Alvarez to apprize him of his arrival.

The answer came promptly—

"Come at once. You are not an hour too soon."

Don Alvarez met him at the door of his villa. The old man was thin with long vigils. He was tearful and heart-broken, and wrung Templeton's hand with spasmodic energy.

Sebastian Alvarez passed him with a haughty bow in one of the saloons.

As he entered her chamber Nina turned with a bright smile.

"Ah, I prayed Heaven to permit me to live until you came, and it has answered my prayer. It was so good in you to forgive all and come, but you could not refuse a dying woman."

It was almost word for word, the same that she, his first love, had said to him but a few months before. Then, however, the visible fountain of his tears had been exhausted, they could no more spring into light. He bent over her very tenderly, and pressed her transparent hand.

"I would have hastened to you through any and all obstacles as soon as I heard, but you are not so ill, are you? You look very bright. You cannot be very ill."

"They tell me that I am."

"What is it, Nina? Do you suffer very much?"

"No pain at all, Earle. There has been but little physical suffering all the while. My learned physicians use all sorts of technicalities, and sometimes they let drop such everyday phrases as neglected cold, nervous debility, and general lack of vital power, but what does it all matter now the end has come?"

"God grant that it may be a long way off," he answered, fervently.

"Hush!" she replied. "I am so glad—so glad and thankful. I had asked but one boon of Heaven an hour ago, that had not been granted, and now that is fulfilled. You will be beside me when I drop off into the last sleep. But Earle, you too are not well. You look hollow-eyed and ill. Has anything troubled you?"

"Do you think I could see you thus, and not grieve?" he asked, in perfect sincerity.

"But you must not worry over me. Do you not see how cheerful I am! Try to be so too for this one evening, dear. You were never in our south land before. Is not everything beautiful here? Poor darling papa thought that I was ungrateful, and did not admire it all; but I do, though I have not said much. Do you hear the gay Italians outside, the pleasure parties on the lake, and the band playing that beautiful air from the opera of 'Traviata!' They played it that night when we went together to the opera-house in N——, and the pretty, dark-eyed woman looked at us so earnestly from the neighboring box. Do you know, Earle, that I cannot help thinking she had a great deal to do with our separation!"

"Oh, darling! what an idea!" he answered. "That is one of your sick fancies."

The sick fancy could nevertheless shame all his philosophical speculations or legal deductions.

"I have dreamed of that face so often of late, Earle," she went on. How talkative she had grown since he came! "And I have fancied her pursuing you with relentless hatred still. Who was she?"

"I do not know, Nina. And I had never thought of her since. It is one of your poetic dreams."

"Well, some one wrote those letters, you know; and why may not she have had a part in it?"

Aye, why not? Some one had done it, surely.

"Well, it is all over now," he answered, "and we will not think of it any more. It was a devil's work, and may Heaven punish the perpetrator as he or she deserves."

"Don't!" she interrupted with a bright smile, for she had thought it but a proof of his love for her. "You must forgive them, as I do. I would not have it otherwise. I am very happy now."

"God keep all knowledge of the wretch who did that from my mind forever," he cried bitterly, "or I might do a deed that would render me doubtful of the forgiveness of Heaven. I could never be patient like you, Nina."

"Well, no, I suppose not. Men are so different from women anyway. I wonder if we ever could understand each other well?"

He pressed her white, slender fingers to his lips, and bowed his face upon them in silence. Oh, how well she had loved him always; and all the tenderest feelings of his manhood had been buried in another's coffin!

He could not realize that this woman, who had been so superbly brilliant in her beauty, could be wasted and dying now. It must all be a dream. The curtains across the window were drawn, but through their softly tinted folds the sun glimmered so cheerfully, and the balmy breezes floated in at the open casement, bringing snatches of gay voices and music on its breath, lending a thousand enchanting perfumes to the atmosphere of the room, as it wantoned over brilliant flowers and fields of roses ere coming to kiss her cheek and rumple with a tender touch the waves of gold above her pale brow. Life and gayety were jubilant everywhere. Only sickness and death followed his footsteps, and fresh graves opened ever along his path.

"And you are willing to die, Nina?" he asked softly after a while, as he lifted his head and saw a smile of ineffable joy flit over the dying girl's face.

"Yes, Earle," she answered. "Perfectly willing now. It is so much better than to live and have our hearts estranged again. You could not have been entirely happy with me. Do you know I used to fancy, Earle, and the fancy has been stronger with me this evening—perhaps with that superior prescience which always comes upon us just before death—that you had loved and loved in vain before we met, and that you had only a great, tender, chivalrous pity for me after all. But then any other woman with a heart in her bosom would have loved you as I did, I know. Yes, these are sick fancies, but you must humor me just a little longer."

Another pause, oh! so mournful in the present reality and in torturing memories, and then she spoke again.

"Earle, are you and Sebastian very good friends?"

"I met him but a moment since," he answered with a start, though she did not notice that. "We have never seen a great deal of each other, you know; and, like myself, I do not think he is a person to form ready attachments."

"Yes, I know; but he is so proud and impetuous, and you are anything but meek or submissive. I was always afraid something had happened to make you bitter, relentless enemies. I am very glad that is a fancy."

"Do not let that disturb you," he said, anxiously. "I am by your side, and will not leave until you send me away. You have been talking so little before, I am afraid you have exhausted yourself very much."

"Well, I am tired, very tired, Earle. Will you lift me a little on my pillows, and then watch until I fall asleep? I have been talking too much."

Her breath came in short, quick gasps. From beyond, through the open casement, the sound of gay voices floated in upon the air. The Italian band had changed from "La Traviata" to the sad, but brilliant "Addio" of Schubert, distinctly audible above the din of the city, and the yet louder roar of the ocean beyond.

Templeton glanced toward the door in alarm.

"No," she said, "do not call any one. It is nothing—only I have tired myself a little too much. I shall be better soon. You may remove one of the pillows now. Ah, it is so sweetly strange to have you for my nurse!"

"You do not think you are worse, Nina?"

"No, as I said, only very tired."

His strong arm lifted the light, frail form; and as he placed her gently back, the long lashes drooped till they lay on her white cheeks.

"Are you falling asleep, Nina?"

"Yes." The dark eyes opened once more with a weary look. "And you will keep watch just a little while, Earle?"

"God bless you, Nina—yes."

The sunlight, the music and the breeze came in afresh to bear him company in his vigil.

Some one opened the door softly, and Templeton turned with a warning look.

"Hush!" he whispered. "Do not wake her. She is sleeping so quietly now."

The doctor moved to his side on tiptoe, and leaned over her. The lips were parted with a smile, but it was unvarying—like that of a statue. He placed his hand upon her wrist.

"She will never awake again in this world," he said, solemnly. "The struggle between life and death has at last ended, and death has won."

Yes, the spirit, pure as an infant's, had glided quietly away into the great shadowy world beyond, with a last thought for a last blessing upon the man she had loved, and for love of whom she had given up all that was, or might have been, so bright and promising in this world, and broken her heart.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The brilliant tide of life outside the Spaniard's villa flowed on as though nothing had happened. And, in truth, what was it? One frail human form had returned to the dust from which it had sprung, just as one leaf might fall in Italy's beautiful valambrosa, never to be missed—to be walked over, crushed into its mother earth and forgotten: such very waifs—such mere atoms in creation are we!

Here the shadow did rest for awhile. No one who had seen this beautiful dead woman could forget her at once. Sawdust several inches thick covered the earth for several squares, and carriages that rattled elsewhere in reckless speed moved here almost without a sound; and the occupants looked up at the closed blinds and the muffled knocker, with its floating badge of crape, as though fearing still to disturb something there. But visitors in gay equipages were no longer driving up, and getting softly out to make whispered inquiries of a footman stationed in the hall, and then turning away with ominous gravity on their faces. Even the cabs of those sage doctors of medicine who had met and consulted there so often, to find that all their skill was but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, were no longer to be seen in front of the piazza. No more of your nauseous drugs! The end of time is already here, and "to-morrow hath no more to say to yesterday" for evermore.

Earle Templeton had returned to his hotel with the look of one for whom Fate hath no more phials of wrath to be expended. There had been no outburst of grief—no heavy tread the night through across his floor. The man intuitively shrank from every possible appeal to human sympathy; yet those who sat at table with him, or even passed him in the corridors, and caught but a glimpse of his immobile white face, with the dark, fathomless, shadowy eyes, were haunted by their expression for hours afterward.

Once, as he passed along, a little girl, with intelligence beyond her years, crept timidly to his side, and thrust into his hand a bouquet of exquisite flowers.

"Nanetta is very sorry for you," she whispered, in the mellifluous accents of her mother tongue, while the tears gleamed in her bright eyes.

"Ah, little one," he returned, in a muttered tone, "you stand in greater need of sympathy than I. The march of life is at least half over with me, I hope, and my shoulders have become inured to its burden; while you—you have yet to be put in harness. Six months ago I should have felt no pity for you, thinking that you were to be a woman; but now I believe that even they can suffer."

A grand heraldic notice of the funeral was sent to him, and he could not do otherwise than attend. When he came out from the church where the solemn service had been chanted, the usher took him by the arm and led him to the second carriage. Don Juan Alvarez and his son occupied the first. As he glanced around the man whispered—

"It was in the orders, sir," and he did not demur further.

The still more imposing ceremonies of the interment were now gone through. The priests murmured, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord," with especial unctuousness, when they had taken into consideration the haughty splendor of the procession and the position of the survivors. And this time it was with singular truthfulness; for few more stainless lives had ever been recorded by the great, unerring Chronicler of our secret destinies than that of Nina Alvarez.

When the carriages had all driven away, Templeton, after going a short distance, got out, with an irresistible impulse upon him, and turned back. Very much as Napoleon looked, that memorable night when the roar of musketry and the thunder of cannon were hushed, and he stood alone amid the dead and dying on the field of battle, did Earle Templeton appear now; and yet in his secret heart he knew that those last words of the dead woman had been true, and that, with all her fresh, young loveliness, she had won from him in life only a semblance of tenderness—only a "grand pity" for the love she had borne him. But it was the utter wrecking of all his plans of happiness that now rendered him moody, despairing, reckless. In this hour he thought of gratified ambition and fame as shadows indeed.

Huge trees, with their shining white chestnut-blossoms, let fall a shower of leaves upon his head. The atmosphere was filled with mille-fleur odors. Above, there was life still; but he thought only of the dead, who had gone to their eternal rest. Evening dews gathered upon the spring violets that clustered beyond the fresh earth. Twilight shadows were stealing over the graves, and the birds were seeking their roost in the boughs that swayed above, when Templeton came out and turned toward the city. On the public way the lazaroni began to throng about him. To be freed from their annoyances, he threw a handful of coin to a distance and pushed on.

In the entrance to one of the streets under an archway of lights, a woman in the garb of a Bohemian stopped him.

"Stranger, let me tell your fortune."

"I know it already," he returned, impatiently. "Small need of a soothsayer to interpret the past."

"The past, stranger! Life is nearly all before you. You have but begun to live."

"God forbid!"

"Do you think the place from which you have come so inviting?"

"More than that to which I am going; for in the former there is at least rest."

"What right have you to talk of rest? Is not life a continued transmigration?"

"Aye, I grant ye. But the oldest philosophers were wisest. It were best never to be born, or being born, to die as soon after as possible. Let me pass on."

"What, because you think the Bohemian practices jugglery, like the rest?"

"Yes."

"You have just left the dead. No wonder that for the time all should seem vanity; but even at this moment life has one other duty for you, as you will confess."

"Ah, what is it?"

"Love may die, but hatred lives. What is it that is causing you even now to hasten to another land?"

"Ha!" exclaimed Templeton, quickly. "I do not understand."

"The loved has been buried, as I say; but the hated still lives. You envy the dead so much that you would fain hasten to them yourself, or send another there. You do not forget at least that you have an insult to avenge."

"No. In that you are right," he exclaimed, unconsciously clenching his teeth.

"Well; and after that, ambition will incite you as before. Most men's natures need elevating; yours, toning down. With you there is still redundancy of feeling. When it has worn away, you will love again."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Templeton, harshly. "You have amused me, and for that I give you credit. For diversion, men who have seen the world as I have may well pay," and he dropped a sovereign in her hand, and passed on.

"When fate has revealed to you what I have said, then remember the Bohemian," muttered the sibyl, but Templeton was already out of hearing.

His way led him through a more fashionable thoroughfare, and as he moved on, the brilliant illumination of the city enabled him to discern Sebastian Alvarez coming down on the opposite pavement. The latter had recognized him also, hesitated for a moment, and then crossed in front of him.

"I leave Naples in an hour, and we shall not meet again. Nothing that has happened will disturb our old understanding?"

"Assuredly not. There are insults that can be wiped out only in blood."

"True. But I am counted the best shot in Europe."

"You will be in Paris by the 3d?" said Templeton, unmoved.

"Or in h—l," was the emphatic rejoinder, and the Spaniard passed haughtily on, muttering, "for her sake I would have spared him, but he has the English obstinacy still; so his fate be on his own head."

There was a grim smile of satisfaction upon Templeton's lips as he entered his hotel. A pretty Italian looking out from her room, beheld him, and muttered—

"Goethe had seen just such a man when he painted the character of Faust. An hour ago this Englishman had the face of a sorrowing angel, and now he looks sardonic as the evil one himself."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 16.)

☞ You may glean knowledge by reading, but you must separate the chaff from the wheat by thinking.

OUR PREMIUM CHROMO.

We are glad to see that our beautiful Chromo, "One of Life's Happy Hours," is receiving its due meed of praise from our readers. We take the following extracts from recent letters. Mrs. Olive King, our graceful and witty New York correspondent, writes us:

"It is the finest picture issued this year. It represents to the life, perfect happiness and contentment. The face of the mother is not surpassed in beauty by any of the Madonnas of the Old Masters. I shall have it framed and hung up where I can look at it often."

Miss Anne L. Forcelle, whose charming sketches have been so much admired, says:

"The picture is indeed 'very pretty,' as you say. I think it is more than that. The attitude of the mother is extremely natural and graceful, and the dear little fellow seems lovingly intent upon her adornment."

Mrs. J. G. A., of Newtown, Md., says:—

"I have received the Chromo, 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' and am very much pleased with it."

Mrs. M. K. Williams, of Mystic, Connecticut, says:—

"I must say the Chromo *far exceeds my expectation*. The engraving, 'One of Life's Happy Hours,' was very popular, but I think the Chromo will be judged by most people to exceed in beauty anything you have offered before. Please to send to the following names."

MERRI'S MOTHER.

BY MADGE CARROL.

"My Dearest Love—

"Sure of my best affection, why continue silent? Why not speak at once? If possible, come to me the moment you read this, and we will arrange for the future. You will find me on the bridge, or somewhere in Brown's lane, near the bridge.

"Lovingly, your own
"Zee."

Captain Hardigan finished reading this remarkable missive, then took a survey of the surrounding landscape. A landscape, by the way, with very pleasing features; family residences embowered in foliage, stretches of greensward, ribbons of roads winding in and out, distant hill-slopes, varitinted with growing grain—and far away, seeming to lift itself against the violet line of the horizon, a silver river, with here and there the dot of a snowy sail.

The little note underwent a second reading, and the landscape a second appeal to make this reading clear—and while this is going on we will take a little run backward in Captain Hobart Hardigan's "wake," as he himself would express it.

Three weeks previous, while bowling along the streets of his native city, he had found himself in the arms of Tom Zollicoffer.

They had been boys together. Tom married in early life, and had a hard struggle to make both ends meet. So hard, indeed, that upon the occasion of his last visit, now twelve years ago, Captain Hardigan had concluded not to go again. The Zollicoffers were too proud to take his money, of which he had an abundance, and he entirely too kind-hearted to look upon such a contest without aching to end it. So he gave little Zeline a ten dollar gold-piece, "for a plaything," and fled from the house, leaving Tom to his fate.

"I'm getting ahead in the world famously," said this self-same Tom, when mutual ejaculations and congratulations over their unexpected meeting had calmed down into coherent conversation. "Was pretty low when I saw you last, and had a tough time with scant wages and a house full of little ones. Come to think, there were only three then; there's been three times three since, yet I've only that number left."

Nothing would do but the captain must go out home with him. And the former was not slow in accepting the cordial, free-and-easy invitation, being a little weary of his lonely, wandering life, and having almost made up his mind to let the Dulcinea start on her next voyage without him. Then, too, some dim notion of marrying and settling down on shore possessed him. Tom gave this definite shape and direction by saying—

"We've got the dearest old maids, the charmingest widows, and the sweetest young girls out our way you ever dreamed off. You shall have your pick of the prettiest, my Zee included."

She was christened Zeline, but her parents concluding to shorten the name for everyday use, took the last E, tacked it to the first, then dropped the second syllable altogether, and she became simply Zee.

"Your Zee! Why man, I'm old enough to be her father."

"Exactly," replied Tom, coolly, "but where's the difference? Besides, I think she rather prefers middle-aged adorers. Seriously, Hobart, I'd rather a million times over my girl would marry you, than any one of the youngsters dangling about her now."

"Your hand on it then. I know I shall love her, for my heart's as soft as a nine-day-old puppy's. I was almost afraid to trust myself in the same house, not being used to women, you know; but since I have your leave to win her, I'll be man enough to bear it if I fail."

Tom gave his hand, assuring the captain it would be the proudest day of his life when he was called upon to give his daughter to one so tried and true.

"It wouldn't do to have her suspect, would it?"

"Never," cried Tom, "she's as spirited as a young colt. You just act your prettiest—speak when the time comes—and the best of luck be with you."

On their way to the depot they overtook a little lady, rosy with her struggles to keep together numerous refractory bundles. A very little lady, in a bottle-green suit, a hat with a humming-bird in it, and two marvellously long black braids of hair hanging straight down her back.

Tom Zollicoffer made a rush for her and swung her bundles on his arm as if they were so many feathers, with so matter-of-course an air too, that the captain fully expected to see him conclude by shouldering the tiny being herself.

"This is my friend, Captain Hardigan; and—and—excuse me, but I can never remember your name. Captain, this is Merri's mother," said Tom, in his own inimitable off-hand way.

The lady had scarcely time to lift a pair of black-lashed, blue-gray eyes to the captain's face and smile, before Tom hurried her on board the train, just within a minute of starting; and once there, there was no opportunity for further interchange of civilities. She taking a seat somewhat in advance of theirs and addressing herself to the prospect in panorama, and Tom talking stocks. Arrived at their destination, some one awaited the lady and her bundles. Tom threw the latter out of the window to this personage before the train stopped. And no sooner had it done so than the former almost instantly disappeared in the crowd around the station, with only a dip from the humming-bird's wings in their direction.

Of course Captain Hardigan had a dozen and one questions to ask about Merri's mother, but was forced to postpone them in consequence of a lengthy argument favoring a residence in the rural districts, in which there was no contrary opinion, for Tom had it all to himself.

Finally a new and peculiar emotion caused our friend to decide upon the indefinite postponement of his inquiries; a feeling of faint-heartedness, a certain stiffening of the lips, when he would broach the subject, now, yet not entirely so; in the dead and buried long-ago he had known the same. Besides this lady was a wife and mother, he had no business to be thinking about her in such a way. No business, yet he seemed to see her eyes again in the peeps of sky between the branches, her fluttering garments in the dark green shrubbery, her sweet red mouth in every bud or half-blown rose that laughed in the sun. Why the very locomotive, now winding away among the hills, said "Merri's mother, Merri's mother," as plain as plain could be.

That Tom was "getting along in the world famously," was apparent in his surroundings. He owned a large breezy house and an acre lot. There were great trees about it, sunny stretches of greensward, vases brimmed with blossoms, and in the background, seen through a vista of beechen pillars, four young girls, in buff, blue, pink and white, were making pictures of themselves, playing croquet. Seeing Tom making long, swinging strides up the garden walk, the girl in pink and the one in white, Zee Zollicoffer and her sister, came bounding forward, brandishing their mallets like tomahawks, but lowered them on observing the stranger, and advanced more decorously. Zee was tall, like her father. Tall and plump, with an abundance of tawny hair that lighted up ravishingly, a large, laughing mouth, lovely teeth, a white rose complexion flecked with great golden freckles, and big blue eyes, thatched with brows and lashes like her hair. Trieste, not being matrimonially eligible by reason of her youth, is not worthy a description. Suffice to say, it was quite apparent that she would never be the beauty Zee was.

After giving each a resounding kiss, Tom introduced his daughters.

"My antediluvian friend, Hobart Hardigan, captain of the Dulcinea, a bachelor who should have been in leading strings this twenty years, my daughter Zee. Cap, and this is Trieste, the baby, otherwise known as Tippet. Where's mother, girls?"

Zee took immediate possession of the captain, asking him if he played croquet, and leading him to be initiated in its mysteries.

"An old bachelor, girls," she found opportunity of whispering in the ears of buff and blue. "Doesn't he look exactly like the least-bit-of-a-younger Neptune?"

"He's more like Santa Claus," replied the Miss in blue, whereupon Zee threatened her with her mallet.

From that hour our friend found himself in clover. Tom was the veritable Tom of yore. Mrs. Zollicoffer being one of those people who lay to heart only the sad things of life, confided at intervals the plaintive side of their family history, and Zee took him in charge when it suited her, alternately petting and scolding as if he were an overgrown boy. Then, too, he made ships for Tom junior, and went in search of waters deep and still enough to sail them in, and spared Trieste a world of worriment by taking upon himself the entire care of her pets, the rabbits, these refractory creatures having filled her juvenile breast with woe and wonder by manifesting an unnatural appetite for everything, even her little bronze slippers, in preference to those recommended as their legitimate food.

To one having spent half his years on shipboard this life was like entering another world. And although at times the voices of the old called to and entreated him, Captain Hardigan enjoyed himself thoroughly and no mistake.

One afternoon, weary of "inglorious ease," he started alone on a long tramp over the hills. Returning by another route, he came upon a cottage nestled on a wood's edge, like some brown bird's nest just dropped from a giant pine. Indeed it was so small he might easily have passed it by on the other side had not a slender smoke-scarf risen from the dilapidated chimney, trailed out across the road, and remained suspended between his gaze and the fading rose of summer's day.

Capt. Hardigan was thirsty, exceedingly thirsty, and the sight of an old-fashioned well-sweep emboldened him to walk up to the cottage door and ask for a drink of water. He did so, expecting to see some aged dame with no airs and graces wherewith to abash an awkward old sailor. He saw instead Merri's mother!

Yes, Merri's mother, sitting there with a black-eyed baby on her knee, and in the background was the aged dame his imagination had conjured up, and whom he would in his bashfulness, if the truth must be told, have far rather faced alone. The little lady arose and held out a mite of a hand. Would not the captain walk in? Remembering he had still no small distance to walk before reaching home, and that Tom's tea-time was alarmingly close at hand, our friend declined with thanks, yet loitered a moment to pat baby's cheek and ask was that Merri.

"Merri!" exclaimed the little mother in apparently the greatest surprise. "No, oh! my, no. Haven't you seen my Merri yet? He's in the drug store, Merrihew Barnesbery. Why, I thought everybody knew Merri!"

"I suppose I'm no better judge of a woman's age than a gander," mentally remarked our captain. "She looks to me about thirteen; to be sure I know she's older, but still this boy of hers must certainly be a mere infant. They do put these youngsters to the ropes so soon ashore here. And I hope to be counted in with everybody before I leave here," he answered aloud.

"You won't wonder then that I love him, and am proud of him!"

"I don't wonder now. I see he's mother's own boy. These mother-boys almost invariably turn out the best of men," he added, thinking it somewhat curious that the lady started and flushed, then gave an odd little laugh.

He thought it rather curious, too, as he walked away that she had given him no invitation to call again. His old-fashioned notions of hospitality were considerably disturbed by the oversight, if such it was, for he wanted to go again. One thing, however, he resolved to lose no time in doing, and that was to beg a holiday for Merri, and make a boat for him.

At the tea-table he mentioned his chance interview with Merri's mother, concluding with—

"He must be a cute little skipper to run a cargo of drugs at his age, or does he only sweep out?"

There was considerable of the girl of the period about Zee Zollicoffer; she was no respecter of persons.

"What is the ancient infant talking about?" she exclaimed, dropping her fork in utter amazement.

Tom laid himself back in his chair and laughed as the sons of Anak must have laughed. Laughed? No, he fairly roared, kicking the table-legs in uncontrollable merriment.

"Where's the joke, pa? Do tell," said Zee.

Tom was past telling for the time. When he managed to find voice, he said—

"I'll take you down to see him after supper. You can tell him you've seen his mother."

Now, for the first time, Zee comprehended the joke, and she laughed her beautiful, red-brown mane all down over her shoulders. Capt. Hardigan joined in the chorus, but for the life of him could not see where the fun was.

After supper there came up a sudden storm, and before its violence had abated, Tom had concluded not to go out, and settled himself to slumber on the lounge. Mrs. Zollicoffer sewed, Tom, Junior, had launched himself, neck deep, in a nautical novel, Zee had withdrawn to a distant window, and was singing soft songs to the sound of the falling rain, pouting a little between whiles because nobody came, and Tippet amused herself curling the captain's hair. "There's Dave Brown and Merri," remarked this little pitcher.

"Where?" asked Zee, starting from shadow into light, like a beautiful picture in richest colors. "How do you know?"

Merri laughed, and Dave said something about the time.

"They've gone up the other street."

The picture withdrew into shade again.

This seemed to be Captain Hardigan's opportunity. He improved it by asking Mrs. Zollicoffer about Merri's mother. That lady shook her head dubiously, and her answer tended to arouse suspicion. Zee started into the light again, a rare flush upon her cheeks, and took up the telling, which was in substance as follows:

Some five and twenty years before, a dark, dashing fellow from the city had come out to that place, when it was only a farming country, and married the sweetest and richest, he looked out for that, maiden in all the region around and about. He proved everything that was bad, broke her parents' hearts, and sent them untimely to their graves, squandered the property, all save one little wood-patch, then utterly worthless, and ended that chapter in his career by sending his young wife to her last resting-place beside her parents. Subsequently he spent the greater part of his time in the city, leaving a two-year old boy and his nurse to get along as best they could on the sums he grudgingly and sparingly gave. Merrihew was twenty-one, an honor to the pious soul who reared him, and a reproach to his wicked father, when that latter individual brought an eighteen-year-old bride to the cottage and left her. Poor little thing, she had imagined she loved him, although, in spite of dyed hair and whiskers, she knew him to be several years her senior, and he was tricked into marrying her by the only relative she had in the world, a scheming aunt. At nineteen Nita was a mother, a few months later a widow.

The subjoined was not in Zee's account. Young Mrs. Barnesbery applied to her aunt for assistance; that unworthy lady answered, "I've done my duty by you. I got you a husband, now get yourself another." The next move was to open a school, but nobody would send children so far; her last resource was family-sewing. In this she was somewhat successful, until Mrs. Zollicoffer discovered in Zee a readiness to fetch and carry the parcels truly alarming to her maternal mind. Having her own private reasons for this feeling, she withdrew her patronage; when questioned, not desiring to confess, she substituted false objections—a thing, conscientious but thoughtless women will do; and Nita soon found herself almost entirely dependent on her big step-son for all she ate and wore.

"So you see Merri's mother isn't his mother after all," interlarded Tom, aroused from his nap. "We got in the way, around here, of calling her husband Black Berry, he was so dark, and it don't come handy to remember her name. Then, as everybody knows Merri, we need only say Merri's mother to make it understood whom we mean."

A few minutes later Merri and Dave Brown were admitted, having gone for reinforcements in the shape of a bevy of bright girls. Merri was a good-looking youth, with frank, brown eyes, black, curly hair and serious mouth. The captain was quite agreeably impressed in his favor, but, for all, concluded not to beg a holiday and make a boat for him.

Next morning Hobart Hardigan felt not a little conscience-smitten, breaking Tom Zollicoffer's bread and swallowing his coffee, with the intention of visiting Merri's mother that very morning, strong within him the while. Finally, under the humanizing influences of a good meal he reconsidered the matter, deciding upon its postponement for a day or two. Meantime he would cultivate Merri's acquaintance. With the half-dozen or more respectable loungers at the drug-store, our captain was speedily "hail fellow well met." They delighted in his sailor yarns, his genial humor, his bluff but kindly ways. Merri himself seemed more than fond of him. It was Merri who, however engaged at the time of our seaman's entrance, contrived to come forward, bring a chair, and take his hat and cane. Man-like, the captain invariably removed his head-gear reluctantly, parting from it with genuine regret, but Merri appeared so deeply interested in his keeping cool, our soft-hearted "old salt" could not, by any possibility, bring his mind to the proper point of resistance.

So the summer days ran on. Zee Zollicoffer turned away all her lovers and would allow no one to escort her save the captain. He was in attendance upon her on every occasion where youth and beauty would meet to "chase the glowing hours with flying feet." The occasions were so numerous Captain Hardigan came to feel more like a martyr than a man, submitting meekly, yet inwardly longing for release and repose. And above all he longed to see Merri's mother—the little girl-mother, with eyes like his own loved sea becalmed under the stars.

Far, very far back in the days that were no more, the hand of Hobart Hardigan's promised bride dropped the orange blossoms for the lilies in the Lord's garden—laid aside her wedding garments for the robes of immortality. The shadow of the cold stone marking her grave-rest had lain so long against his heart, no other woman's voice or smile had penetrated there until this little lady spoke and smiled. The captain accounted for it in this way: She was like Lucy. A fatal sign. She was no more like Lucy than you or I.

Every day this longing to see her deepened, strengthened, while every day found him more inextricably entangled in the mesh of the tawny-haired Zee. And one morning, when Tom clapped him on the back as he made ready for a picnic, and said, "My boy, I verily believe you've made a conquest. I never saw her so entirely devoted to one individual. You can't think how happy it makes me," he had a wild notion of running off to sea. That did not seem altogether advisable on second thought, since the Dulcinea was already rocking leagues from land. The time came when he could endure this state of affairs no longer. So, notwithstanding he had received no invitation to renew his call, he bent his steps in the direction of the little brown bird's nest on the wood's edge.

The rickety old gate never made a pretence of being closed, so, of course, stood wide open, as did the cottage door. From within came sounds of girlish laughter, little bubbling trills, mingled with exclamations, half vexation, half amusement. Of course it behooved Hobart Hardigan to give timely warning of his approach, but he was in too big a hurry, he never thought of it. He just walked in to find Merri's brother on the floor in a snarl of carpet-strips, holding captive by the hair Merri's mother, who was trying to release herself and him.

"I had left the room but a moment to give some directions to Jubie, and he rolled himself right up in these," she explained to the captain, who gallantly released her. "Naughty, naughty boy!" showering such kisses on the baby face the captain wished with all his might he hadn't come.

The "naughty boy" resented the infringement on his inalienable right to "the pursuit of happiness" in a nest of carpet-rags, by a succession of screams that made our hero tremble for fear he should burst.

Nothing daunted, Merri's mother undertook the task of soothing and diversion, in which she was so successful as to end in getting the young belligerent to sleep. And what a picture she formed, rocking in and out of the sunshine with her baby in her arms.

Then, with the child across her knees, and her busy hands again at work joining the long strips, sunshine glittering down her silken braids like golden chains woven in and out, and touching her cheek as though it were a ripe peach, she talked of her married life and Merri.

"We want to get carpet enough to cover the floor all over before another winter," she had said, first apologizing for going on with her sewing. "I save every scrap, and Jubie, Merri's old nurse, you know, has begged a good many from the people she knows. She's a dear, good soul as ever was. She was the first Mrs. Barnesbery's nurse, and never means to desert the family, she says. What I should do without her I don't know. We think before snow comes we shall be right snug under foot." So she ran on, little child-like thing, about home matters and all that was nearest her heart and life, with an occasional lifting of the curtain between those days and the dark period of her early married history. "When I look at my baby, sometimes I tremble, and pray daily he may never grow hard like his father. He's his very image, and I'm afraid he will be like him in character, whatever I may do to prevent it. I love my boy as fondly as ever a mother loved, but you know what is said about sins being visited—oh, I'm afraid! I'm afraid!" She broke off suddenly with that, clasping the child to her breast. He awoke and smiled up in her face so sweetly she was reassured for the time and turned pleasantly to other topics.

The captain left her with sunset roses on her cheeks and hair; the next day brought him face to face with Zee's message. Upon the first hint of his starting for the drug store she had flown for his hat and cane. This was a daily occurrence, accompanied by warnings not to forget any engagement pending, but on this occasion he had observed a slip of paper in the rosy palm of the daughter of the house. Then when Zee placed his hat in his hand, and his eye caught sight of that same Nile-green note peeping from the lining, and not a word from that lovely mouth, he at once appropriated the document, religiously believing it was intended for him, and contained some message she dared not speak. Shade and sunshine came and went in gray and gold across its sloping letters as he read them over a third time, then looked out over a stretch of pasture-land and saw the little bridge, veiled in alder-blossoms like a homely bride under rich laces. Our captain had borne the brunt of many a gale gallantly, had looked death in the face unflinchingly, yet over there a beautiful woman awaited him, the rills of ruffling on her blue gingham dress rippling in the wind; but he fled, nor stopped even to take breath until he reached the drug-store and found himself surrounded by a crowd. His perturbation was so apparent, Merri seemed unusually anxious to make him comfortable, bearing his coveted head-gear away in a perfect gale of politeness, leaving the old sailor nervously ramming Zee's note down in his vest pocket to make sure it should not escape to fall into other hands. Suddenly an idea struck him. He followed Merri behind the case where he went to put his hat. A thing he never did before. Would Merri mind doing a bit of writing for him? His fingers were all thumbs, couldn't even keep his own log-book. Merri would not mind, what was it?

"Only a line on this," and Captain Hardigan spread the note, face down, on the marble ledge.

Merri would have raised it, but the captain kept his thumb there like the state's seal. Then Merri remarked on the peculiarity of the color. Our captain had seen reams like it. What was he to write? Merri asked.

"There will be nothing lost by waiting. The world was not made in a hurry."

It never occurred to our captain that this was a cruel reply to so impassioned an appeal. Zee loved him, or thought she did; Tom's heart was set on the match, and his had gone over to Merri's mother! Very uncomfortable complications certainly, and this was the only way of postponing the crisis he could hit upon.

"A singular sentence," said Merri, slowly dipping his pen in the ink. It was an answer to a conundrum, the captain explained. Certainly not far from the truth. Merri, apparently greatly relieved, dashed off the sentence, asking should he sign any name? Saying no, and thanking him, Captain Hardigan took the precaution to pocket the "answer to a conundrum," intending before reaching home to put it where it had been found.

Zee came forward precisely as usual to take his hat and cane. The captain's desire to repossess himself of those articles, and that single line, came too late. Feet that seemed winged were skimming with both toward the hat-rack, and he turned guiltily toward the dining-room. A cry of mingled grief and rage stayed him on the threshold. He saw Zee tearing that wretched paper into shreds, and crying:

"Oh, shame, shame, agony! Go away, every one of you!" to the family who gathered about her. "Don't look at me! Don't speak to me!"

"Leave her to me," said Tom to the captain, who would have thrown himself at her feet. So he left her. "She will never forgive me, nor will Tom," he argued, and making up his bundle, escaped unseen. Five weeks later, as he walked the deck of a steamer outward-bound, he came face to face with Nita Barnesbery. Merri was going over on business for a city firm, and had brought his "family," he said.

"It's not altogether sea-sickness that ails Merri." It was the tenth night out. Captain Hardigan and Mrs. Barnesbery paced the deck, while the moonlight lay white and soft on the anxious little face, hooded in scarlet, and the waves wore the color of her eyes. "It's heart-sickness. Miss Zollicoffer has broken her engagement, and will give no reason for doing so—will not even see him."

"Were they engaged?" asked our captain, groaning inwardly.

Oh, yes, but it was kept secret, because Zee's father had declared over and over again his daughter should not marry a poor man. There was no harm in telling him, now that it was all over. Indeed, she rather felt it her duty to tell him, since they had made use of his hat to fetch and carry notes.

"What do you say?" inquired her hearer with a startling emphasis.

"Oh, there now, don't be angry, although they did treat you unfairly, using you to keep other gentlemen at a distance and carry letters. I told Merri he ought to take you into his confidence. They were so tired of waiting, poor things, and had so little chance, they thought no harm of sending notes back and forth in the lining of your hat. You won't be angry, will you?"

"No, it's not that. Go on."

"There's nothing more, only the last note Merri ever sent he asked Zoe if he shouldn't brave all and speak to her father the coming week. No answer to that ever came, nor will she speak to him, nor grant an interview, although he has almost begged in public for one."

Being in possession of the key to this mystery, the captain in great humiliation and distress confessed his share in it, and that very night the facts were made known to Merri, who began to mend rapidly in consequence.

They all got married and lived happy forever after. Yes, there is not much besides to tell. Merri finished up his business in an incredibly short time, and on the eve of their departure for their native land, his mother married our captain. To be sure her bridegroom was old enough to be her father, and showed it. There was frost in the crisp rings of his hair, and his beard looked as though it had been dipped in sea-foam, yet the little lady loved him "notwithstanding all."

The neighborhood that had snubbed poor and pretty Nita Barnesbery, that stood so persistently on the alert to convict her of impropriety that she did not dare ask a respectable middle-aged gentleman to visit her, vied with itself to do her honor when, as the wealthy Mrs. Hardigan, she returned to it for a season and took rooms at its biggest hotel.

"They were a couple of the greenest of goslings," said Tom Zollicoffer to Captain Hardigan, meaning of course Zee and her lover. "I didn't want my girl to go through with what her mother did, that's all. It sours them so, don't you see?"

Our captain thought of his own wife and couldn't see; of Tom's, and could.

"Had I known her heart was set on the match, she would have met no direct opposition from me. That Merri's a splendid fellow. She might have waited and fared worse."

And the baby! Did the captain prove a good father to the little black-eyed boy?

There was no opportunity. Baby drooped on the homeward voyage. Then came a sombre eventide, when a beautiful piece of sculpture, an infant image in snow, was lowered to the grave-sown bosom of the sea. He never grew hard like his father.

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XLIX.

TAKING COUNSEL.

The desire of the moth for the star,
Of the night for the morrow,
The devotion to something afar
From the sphere of our sorrow—*Shelley*.

A dark look of mingled mortification and rage crossed Lord Nortonshall's countenance as he took the scarf in his hand and turned it over. There was no mistaking the peculiar pattern. It was one he had seen on Frank Vavasour's neck many a time and oft, and he ground out a bitter curse from between his lips.

"Cheated—gulled—deceived," he muttered, in a low tone, "by both of them—and Claudia? No, hardly by her. My poor, innocent dove of a wife has made a dupe of her, no doubt. But, by all that's holy, I'll have my revenge now. Yes, my Lady Nortonshall, it is the last time that you shall hoodwink me."

In his excitement, he had forgotten that Langham remained still in the room while he was thus speaking half-aloud. She was standing respectfully enough at a little distance from him, but eagerly drinking in every word he said, nevertheless.

"Well, what the deuce are you standing gaping there for?" he asked, sharply enough, as his eyes fell upon her. "Are you waiting to see how much in the shape of gossip you can collect to retail down below?"

The woman smiled rather scornfully, as it seemed to the irate nobleman; but she answered him very respectfully.

"You forget, my lord," she answered, "the special recommendation you had with me from my last mistress."

"What?"

"That I could hold my tongue."

"Bah! What had you got to be silent about while you were with her?"

"Well, she had secrets, which I kept faithfully. They were a heavier load upon me than ever yours can be, and you will find that I can be quite as discreet in your service as I was in hers."

"I hope you will, for your own sake."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. The first word that I hear of this night's business will be the signal for your dismissal from this house."

"Oh, you need not fear my discretion, my lord, I assure you."

"That's your own lookout. Remember my warning, and above all, say nothing to your mistress about what I have discovered. Do you understand?"

"Certainly, my lord."

"Then mind that you obey me. I will be even with her yet."

Langham was profuse in her protestations of silence, and Lord Nortonshall dismissed her; but the woman was thoroughly frightened at her master's look and tone in speaking of his unfortunate wife, and by no means satisfied at the turn things had taken. They were looking rather more serious than she had bargained for.

"Surely to goodness he doesn't mean her any harm," she said to herself, as she went upstairs to her own room. "I'm almost sorry I didn't hold my tongue, and let her off, poor young thing. I wonder how she managed to outwit them all, after a fashion. It strikes me that actress must have assisted her; but if so, how, in the name of fortune, did she manage to get into the house? That's what puzzles me. However, I'll just let Mr. Bertram know all about it, and leave him to put the pieces together, if he can."

As Langham had said, Frank Vavasour had met her not many steps from the door immediately after his unseen escape from the house. He did not do more than catch a glimpse of the woman, who came so suddenly upon him that she seemed to spring out of the darkness, as it were, so suddenly had she appeared before his eyes, only to disappear as rapidly; and, to his horror and amazement, into the house which he had just left.

"Who could she be?"

He asked himself the question in vain, for he had not been able to discern her features through the thick veil which enshrouded them, and even if he had he would not have known her.

"After all," he thought, "it could only be some friend of one of the servants."

He tried hard to make himself believe that this was all, and that he would not be known to her; but still the unpleasant conviction would force itself upon his mind that he had been, not only seen, but recognized, and he trembled, not for himself, but the consequences to Alma. They were too terrible to think about, and he made his way straight to Bayswater, determined to see Claudia.

He found that she had just arrived at home, a very few minutes having sufficed for her to detain Lord Nortonshall downstairs. She would not venture on more, fearing that he might possibly suspect some hidden motive if she were to show too obvious an inclination to keep him; and she knew that Alma would avail herself of the earliest opportunity to get Frank out of the house. And so she made her escape from his lordship's fulsome compliments as soon as possible, and calling a cab, told the driver to take her home as fast as he could, for she guessed that Frank would be there at some time.

"I thought I should see you soon," she said to him, with a sad smile, as he entered the room to find her sitting, pale and exhausted, on the couch, from which he would not allow her to rise, but fetched a chair to her side.

"Yes, Claudia, I have come to thank you. You saved me—saved us both, indeed."

"Both?"

"Yes—myself and Alma."

"Ah, true!"

And she sank back wearily.

"What is the matter?" he asked, in an alarmed tone, for she looked very pale. "Are you ill?"

"No—only weary."

"What has made you so?"

"I don't know. I am often tired without any apparent cause now, and this has been an agitating evening even for me, on many accounts."

"Yes, indeed it has, dear Claudia. I am very selfish, but not ungrateful, believe me. What shall I ever say to you—how thank you for what you have done?"

"Say nothing, my dear Frank—I want no thanks from you. All I would ask is, that you will sometimes remember, when there is nothing left of me but my name, that, like a sister, I would have laid my life down for your happiness if need be."

"Claudia!"

"Yes," she continued, "and for hers, too, Heaven bless her! I have more reasons than you think of, Frank, for loving that poor girl."

"What can you mean?"

"I will tell you. You have heard from me the story of the crucifix I gave, when a child, to another child?"

"Yes, yes, of course! What of it?"

"It is in her room."

"Whose? Alma's?"

"Aye, in Alma's. She was the little golden-haired angel whose sudden appearance stayed Jasper Glosson's murderous hand from taking my mother's life."

"You must be dreaming, Claudia!"

"No; I am positive it was her father who rescued my mother from that villain's grasp—and for her dear sake I would die for his child."

"As he himself did for that act of generosity," said Frank, sadly.

"How?"

"I have a conviction, how formed I can hardly explain, that it was that same Jasper Glosson who shot Mr. Bouverie; and I believe that a day will yet come when I shall stand face to face with the villain, and charge him with his treachery."

"You may be right—indeed, I cannot help thinking that you are," said Claudia, with a sigh. "But whether it will ever come to light, Heaven only knows. There is a world of undiscovered sin around us in this weary life, and many a wretch goes down to the grave with honor and respect, for whom no word would be too vile, no fate too cruel, were his crimes but known."

"I shall find this man some day—I am sure I shall."

"I hope so, Frank. But about what has passed to-day. I dread the consequences of your having been recognized by anybody coming from that house."

"And so do I, but not for myself. It is for her—my darling—that I tremble and grow cold with fear."

"Frank!"

"Don't look at me like that, Claudia. I know that she is another man's wife, and a faithful one; but I cannot forget that she was promised to me, not only with her own will, but with her father's sanction."

"Did he really desire your marriage so much, then?" asked Claudia.

"He used to tell me that it was the dearest wish of his heart to have me for his son-in-law. Oh, if he could but rise from his grave and see how his wishes have been set at naught—how they took my darling from me!"

And Frank Vavasour groaned in bitterness of spirit.

"Nay," said Claudia, gently, "it was not their fault, after all. You know that they believed you dead."

"Aye, but she would have lived for my memory alone, if they had not driven her to the altar. But they were too strong for her—that bold, bad man, and the crafty old woman who turned me away from her door the other day. Alma never loved him they forced her to marry—never loved any one but me. She said so—says so still—though she endeavors to do her duty by that villain, my poor darling! They worked upon her broken heart, and tried her gentle spirit to the utmost, till she swore to love, honor, and obey that heartless scoundrel who ill-treats her now, whilst I am powerless to offer her any aid. I can do nothing for her—nothing."

Every word that he uttered went to poor Claudia's heart like so many sharp knives. She, who would have given all that she possessed—nay, her very life—for him, to hear him speak such gentle, loving words of another, to see him weeping tears such as men seldom weep, like shedding drops of their heart's blood, for another woman—to feel that she, who loved him so, was only as a sister to him. It was hard, very hard; but she was brave, and her love was unselfish, so she hid the wounds from which she was bleeding.

"No, you can do nothing," she murmured.

"Oh, but I am terrified for her," he went on. "That man would hesitate at nothing, not even murder, if he suspected anything of what has passed, and I see no way of finding out what happens."

"I will find out for you," she said, with a low sigh. "They will admit me, whoever else is kept out, and whatever is passing or has occurred in the house I shall learn."

"Thanks, thanks," said Frank, an expression of hope lighting up his features. "You will go soon?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. Some day I may have it in my power to repay you for your kindness."

He rose now, and after a few words of leavetaking went away. Claudia tried to compose her thoughts, but she was greatly agitated by the events of the evening, and a cold perspiration stood upon her brow.

"This will not do," she said to herself. "I must try and keep strong yet a little longer—for a time, at least, till things are straighter than at present. I hope Frank was not seen, as he suspects. If he were—ah, I tremble even to think of it. Poor girl—poor girl!"

A hollow cough, which frequently oppressed her, came on as she spoke, and the handkerchief she passed across her lips came away speckled with blood.

"Ah, can this be the beginning of the end?" she asked herself, mournfully. "Shall I die as my mother did—fading away day after day, till the world and all it holds of good and evil slips from my grasp, and leaves me alone on the threshold of an unseen world? Well, better so, perhaps. What have I got to live for? If I could only see them happy, I should be glad to die, and be at peace."

Dorothy came in shortly afterward to prepare her young mistress for bed, and found her with quivering lips and tearful eyes. The faithful old servant gently scolded her, as she might have done a little child.

"You ought to be in bed, that's what you ought," she said, with an attempt at crossness which signally failed, and Claudia was fain to be undressed, and lay down to such repose as she could hope for; but, alas, her slumbers were but broken ones, at the best.

CHAPTER L.

FOILED.

There is a method in man's wickedness;
It grows up by degrees.
—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

The night wore slowly away, but it came to an end at last, as even the longest one will; and with the first gray dawn of the new-born day Claudia Wynne woke from her uneasy slumbers with a strange dread upon her.

She had dreamed a dream—a strange one—and she could not shake off the impression it had made upon her. She thought that Alma stood by her bedside, pale and breathless, and beckoning to her, said—

"Come! come!"

And then the figure faded from her eyes, and Claudia tossed uneasily upon her bed until the vision came again, with wildly imploring eyes and outstretched hands, exclaiming, in piteous accents—

"Come! come at once!"

This time it was so real, and she heard the words so distinctly, that she was roused from sleep, and springing hastily out of bed, found it was daybreak. There was, of course, no one near her, but she still seemed to hear the voice, wildly entreating her—

"Come! Save me!"

"What can it mean?" she said to herself, with a shudder. "I have been dreaming, I suppose."

But still the voice rang in her ears as distinctly as though the speaker were beside her, and starting up, Claudia commenced to dress herself.

"I will go," she said, as she hurriedly wound her long hair into a thick coil. "I can't bear this. It's very foolish of me, I suppose, but if it is fancy I can do no harm. If it is more than a mere dream—if she really needs me—perhaps Heaven has sent me this warning for a purpose. Yes, I will go to her."

She dressed herself rapidly as she spoke, in the quietest costume she could find, and taking a large cloak lined with sable to wrap herself in, she opened her room door quietly and went down-stairs. The housemaid, who had just risen, and stood rubbing her sleepy eyes in the hall, stared with undisguised astonishment at seeing her mistress going out at such an early hour; but Claudia took no further notice of her than to sign her wish for the door to be opened, and she passed into the street, and bent her step towards Lord Nortonshall's town house.

Claudia shivered with the cold as she slipped out into the gray morning light, and passed swiftly along the snow-covered streets toward her destination. It seemed so strange to her to be out at this unusual hour, and she imagined herself observed at every corner; and so to a certain extent she was, but not by any one that knew her. The people whom she met were hurrying to work and business, and cast many a curious glance at the elegantly-dressed lady who passed them; but there was no chance of her being recognized as she hurried timidly along with her head bent down, uncertain whether to turn back or proceed upon her errand. More than once she stopped and hesitated, but when she did so the voice she had heard in her strange dream seemed to ring in her ears the same imploring words—

"Come! come quickly!"

And she resolved to go on her way at all hazards.

"Yes," she murmured, "I must see what it means. If there is nothing the matter, no harm can come of it; but if it was really a warning of some evil, Heaven grant I may be in time to prevent it! I am sure mine was a warning vision, and no idle dream."

She was beginning to feel rather tired, and seeing a cab that was returning empty from some early morning train, she called it, and bidding the driver stop at the end of the street on which the back part of Lord Nortonshall's house opened, she was glad to lean back upon the cushions and think.

She drew both of the windows up, for she fancied, and not without reason, that she was an object of curiosity to the cabman. She was right in her suspicion. The man was not a little puzzled by his fare. She was a lady, he thought—there was no doubt of that—daintily dressed and wrapped in furs, and, as such, he wondered what she could be doing out at that untimely hour. But it was no business of his, and he drove her rapidly, as she had requested, though the fleeting minutes seemed to her like long hours in her impatient anxiety, and she fancied that a long time had elapsed before he set her down at the end of the dull street, which was only a row of back doors let into low brick walls, behind which rose in stately grandeur the houses, one of which contained so much to interest her.

She dismissed the man and walked along the street, in which the snow lay white and untrodden, and her feet marked every step she took until she stood before the door of the house she wished to enter.

How should she get in?

That was a contingency she had never thought about, and now that she stood upon the very threshold, she thought it was an impossibility, and stood irresolute, uncertain what to do.

And still the voice rang in her ears with thrilling emphasis—

"Come! come quickly!"

Claudia gazed despairingly at the iron-clamped door. What should she do? If she rang the great, clanging bell, she would arouse the whole house, be escorted in state to the front apartments, and her purpose—though, indeed, she hardly knew what she intended, more than to gain admittance—be defeated altogether.

"What shall I do?—what shall I do?" she moaned, despairingly, and wrung her hands, as the voice seemed to die away to her excited imagination.

Fortune favored her, however. While she stood, uncertain what course to pursue, a man's muffled footstep sounded in the snow behind her. Involuntarily she shrank into the doorway, hoping that she might be unseen; but, to her surprise, and at first terror, he halted at the very door, and then, as she turned and recognized him, she gave a low cry of relief.

"Brown!" she exclaimed, in surprise.

It was indeed Lord Nortonshall's valet who was about to enter the house. He looked very pale and haggard, as though he had not been to bed all night.

"Why, Brown," she repeated, as he started at the sound of her voice in evident confusion, and looked at her in a bewildered sort of fashion, "don't you know me?"

"Know you? I—I—" he stammered, peering at her, for her veil was down.

"Yes," and she threw it up, showing her features.

He started in surprise.

"You, mademoiselle!"

"Yes, I. Can you let me in? I have been waiting here some little while, wondering how I could gain admittance. I don't wonder at your being surprised," she continued, seeing his astonished look. "I am myself at being here. But I want to get in at once!" exclaimed Claudia.

"Certainly you can, mademoiselle," he said, producing a pass-key, and opening the door for her. "Shall I go to my lord and let him know that you are here? I will call Langham to you at once, if she is up, for I am not exactly—"

"No, no, do not call any one," said Claudia, interrupting him. "I am going straight up to your mistress's rooms."

"To my lady?"

"Yes. I shall be welcome, never fear. I have the key—see, here it is—so I can let myself in."

She turned away to go up the dim staircase, but he stopped her.

"Well, what is it?" she said.

"Don't mention to his lordship, if you see him, that you met me coming in this morning. He is not aware of my having been out, and though I don't suppose he has wanted me, yet, still—"

"I will not say anything to him, you may be sure of that. I will keep your counsel, if only in gratitude for your having let me in unobserved."

"Thank you, mademoiselle," said Brown, and he left her, going away to his own den, wondering not a little what could have brought her there at so early an hour.

"Whatever can she want?" he pondered. "I'm sure there must be something afoot, or she wouldn't be abroad at this time. Well, after all, it's nothing to me. I'm paid for my work, and as most of it is to mind my own business and ask no questions, I'll do it."

Meanwhile, Claudia passed up the stairs with a rapid and noiseless step, till she arrived at the door of which she held the key, where she paused and listened intently. All was still and silent on the other side. No sound of footsteps, no murmur of voices broke the almost deathlike stillness, and she could almost fancy she heard the rapid beating of her own heart as she noiselessly placed the key in the lock, and opened the door.

There was no sound even then, for the locks and hinges were all in good order, and she reached the entrance to Alma's apartment without attracting any attention.

She opened it, and entered the room, which was the first of the suite, and also had a door communicating with the front of the house. She slipped across and tried it.

It was fast!

"I thought so," she murmured. "Locked in. Is she alone, I wonder?"

As she spoke she looked across at the inner room, but Alma was not there. A bright fire gleamed in the grate, and on the table stood a coffee service. Lord Nortonshall stood upon the hearthrug, with his back toward her, looking intently at something he held in his hand.

She stood a few moments watching him, and hardly daring to breathe; but she could not make out what it was that he held, and she closed the door of the little room in which Frank had been hidden, which told nothing of what was passing or had passed behind it.

What had happened? Was the awful dread that had so often filled her heart indeed a truth, and Lord Nortonshall's cup of iniquity filled by the murder of his wife?

Claudia shuddered at the very thought, and looked in vain for any sign of aught living in the rooms besides his lordship and herself. He moved, and she shrank behind the folds of the heavy curtains with which the windows were hung, only just in time to escape his observation as he turned from the fire with a puzzled look upon his face, and taking up the handsome coffee-pot, began to pour some of its contents into a cup.

Then, with a wild throb at her heart, Claudia Wynne saw, only too plainly, what he held—her own two bottles, and she waited in breathless agony for what should come next. She saw him hold them both up to the light, and look at them with an undecided expression; but finally he seemed to make up his mind, and placed one of them in the pocket of his dressing-gown.

"Yes. I shall want that for myself," he said, as he did so. "I'm sure that I hav'n't made any mistake."

He continued talking to himself in a low, hurried voice, as he proceeded in preparing the coffee, and then paused for a moment, with an evil look upon his face.

"So," he muttered, "she didn't want any coffee. Wouldn't take it from me for fear that I should poison her, I suppose; but you'll take it now for all that, my lady."

Already the little gold top was unscrewed from the phial, and the stopper held between the finger and thumb. Another moment and the deadly draught would have been mixed, but the hand of the would-be murderer was suddenly arrested in a manner he little expected, for Claudia quietly put aside the curtains, and glided swiftly toward him.

With a low cry of terror he recoiled from her. To his guilty imagination it seemed as though a spirit from the other world had come to stay his hand, and for a moment he could not speak. Then, as he saw who it really was, he rallied from his momentary terror, and confronted her.

"You here!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my lord. I have come in time, I see."

"In time! For what?"

"To save you from making a grave mistake."

"I—I do not understand."

"Yes, I repeat, a terrible mistake. Your morning's work would have been wasted if I had not come to help you."

He looked at her doubtfully.

"To help me?"

"Yes."

"How?"

"You were about to use the contents of the wrong bottle. That is simply the narcotic."

CHAPTER LI.

IS THE DEED DONE?

Murder most foul, as at the best it is—
But this most foul, strange and unnatural.
—*Shakespeare.*

His lordship looked at Claudia with a searching glance as she spoke the words; but she did not shrink, and he, uncertain in his own mind, believed that she had spoken truth, and replaced the stopper in the phial, still holding it tightly clenched in his hand, however, while he stood looking at his visitress.

It was a strange scene, if any one had held the clue to what it meant—that dark, defiant-looking man, faced by a pale, delicate woman, who had to exercise all her powers of self-command to prevent him from perceiving the state of nervous agitation she was in. One only thought possessed her—how to prevent this madman from carrying out his fiendish intentions; for that Lord Nortonshall was not in his proper senses the actress firmly believed, and to a certain degree she was right.

She had stayed him for the moment; but she must still employ stratagem to defeat entirely his purpose, and in the few moments she had been in the room a plan had presented itself to her mind by which she might save the unfortunate Alma—a plan in all appearance simple, but difficult of execution; but she resolved to try it.

Her first impulse had been boldly to denounce the intending murderer; but, on reflection, she rightly judged that if she gave any alarm, or made an exposure, it might lead to the very result she wished to prevent.

His lordship would, of course, deny her story, and what proof beyond her own suspicions—for whatever weight they might bear to herself, she could not but feel that they would sound highly improbable to others—could she bring?

No. She determined to meet craft by stratagem—the only way to cope with a man in Lord Nortonshall's present temper; and trust to the chapter of accidents to bring about a favorable result.

It must not be supposed that these thoughts occupied her mind for the same length as the telling them. On the contrary, they flitted through her brain in a hurried race, as it were, while his lordship stood before her, gazing as though he would read her very soul.

"What brought you here?" he asked at length, in a suspicious tone.

She crept closer to his side before she answered, though in her heart she loathed the very contact of her dress with this man, who was, she well knew, in his heart a murderer.

"Bah!" she exclaimed, with a light laugh, "you were going to bungle. Be thankful that I came in time to set you right."

"Hush!" he said, in an alarmed tone, pointing to the door of the inner room. "My lady isn't asleep."

"And you are—"

"Making her coffee, as you see."

"Ah! What a devoted husband."

"Yes," he answered, with a grim smile; "she'll not deceive me any more."

"Deceive you!"

"Yes. That fellow, Frank Vavasour, was here last night, as I suspected. She outwitted me; but I'm going to be even with her now, and so we're going to take a cup of coffee together, that's all."

Claudia felt very faint and sick with terror; but she contrived to keep her self-possession, and even answer him with a meaning look.

"She will not stand in the way much longer," he continued; "and then you shall be my lady, my fairy queen, the mistress of all here."

She shivered as he spoke the words, and he observed the movement.

"What ails you?" he asked, almost savagely.

"Nothing. I am cold, I think—this raw morning air is very piercing."

"Come closer to the fire—come!"

And he drew her within his arms.

By a great effort she repressed the cry which rose to her lips and disengaged herself.

"We are wasting time," she said.

"Yes, yes, and I want you to help me, now you are here—to help me, do you understand? Did you not tell me once that these drugs leave no traces of their presence?"

"I did," she answered, though the effort to speak was great; "and I told you truth. They do their work both well and quickly; but you were about to use the wrong one, as I told you."

"Then show me which is right—quick," he said, producing them both. "Tell me which is the—"

"The poison?" she interrupted, calmly.

"Yes."

"This."

And she pointed to the one which he retained in his hand, placing the other in his pocket again.

"Give that to me," she said.

"What for?"

"Oh, a fancy of mine, that is all."

"No, no, my lady that shall be," he replied, mockingly; "I'll keep that in my own possession for fear of accidents. But what brought you here?" he asked again, as he uncorked the phial she had pointed out.

"Kismet," answered Claudia, "and your ascendant star. Suppose I had not come in time to stay your hand, what do you think would have been the consequences?"

"Well, what?"

"My Lady Nortonshall would have woke in her coffin, that's all, and your work would all have to be done over again."

"Ugh!" he exclaimed, with a shudder. "I don't want that. But are you sure I have used the right one now?"

"Yes—quite sure."

"Will it—will it take long?"

He spoke in a tone of feverish anxiety, but without the slightest trace of compunction or remorse for what he was about to do, and Claudia answered in as cool a tone.

"No, not long. In five minutes from the time she drinks the cup of coffee—if she will drink it—"

"She shall!" he replied, with an oath.

"Ah! then you can send for the proper people, and have her—"

But she could not go on with the horrible picture she had conjured up.

Fortunately his lordship did not notice the pause, as he perfectly understood her, and was pouring the dark-colored liquid into the cup of coffee.

"So—no smell, no taste," he muttered. "Heart disease, my Lady Nortonshall, is your complaint."

When the madman—for such Claudia felt fully convinced he was—had thus mixed with deliberate hand the draught which was to take the life of the woman he had sworn to love and cherish, he turned to Claudia with a fiendish smile, and said—

"Now then for the last act of the drama!"

His face was very terrible to see, with its blind hate and fury, and Claudia began to feel her strength give way. A horrible dread came over her that she should betray herself, and precipitate some awful catastrophe.

"Let me go while you do it," she murmured, faintly. "I will come back when—"

"No, no—you stay now!" he exclaimed, seizing her by the wrist. "We'll both row in the same boat, as you are here; so come and take coffee with my lady and me."

He laughed wildly as he spoke, and Claudia felt more than ever convinced that he was mad; but he still kept a secure hold on the cup, and would not suffer her to go near it.

"Sit down," he said.

She did so; indeed, it would have been impossible for her to keep her feet any longer. Her knees trembled, and the room swam round with her, as she saw his lordship walk toward the door of his wife's room, with the poisoned cup still in his hand.

And now a strange nervous dread took possession of Claudia Wynne's heart and mind. She shook in every limb as she thought that, after all, she might have made a mistake, and that there would be a fatal ending to the scene yet.

"Alas!" she murmured, "what shall I do?"

An intense longing seized her to fly from out that deadly room—to be out in the open air again. She felt as though she could not draw her breath, and there came upon her a choking desire to proclaim her terror by wild shrieks, which she could hardly restrain herself from uttering; and it was only by clinging convulsively to the arms of the chair into which she had fallen, rather than seated herself, that she was prevented from falling out of it.

"Alma, come here!" called Lord Nortonshall, as he opened the door of the little room; and, obedient to his summons, the unfortunate victim of his hate appeared.

She had evidently not been sleeping, and looked almost as colorless as the soft white garments which she wore, and which, falling to her feet in many folds, made her present the appearance of a corpse just risen from the grave.

Her eyes had the fixed, stony glare which follows extreme agitation or terror, and her hands, white and worn, trembled nervously, as she came slowly forward, and stood before her husband with the abject look of a tortured animal.

"Why do you call me?" she asked.

"I want the pleasure of your company to breakfast," he replied, mockingly. "Sit down there."

He pointed to a chair, which she took in the same apathetic manner, and he advanced toward her with the cup in his hand, while Claudia watched the strange scene with an intensity of anguish she had hardly power to conceal.

"Drink this," said Lord Nortonshall to his wife, in a low, determined tone.

She made a repelling gesture, and then, for the first time, saw Claudia.

"Ah! who is this?" she asked. "Oh, I know; it is the woman who was here last night—the actress. She seemed true and good then; but it was the cunning of the serpent. She must be false and wicked, or I should not see her here with you."

"Drink this," he repeated.

"Never! Would you poison me in her presence, that she may gloat over my agony? I tell you that I know it is poison, and I will not drink it."

"You shall!" thundered Lord Nortonshall, his eyes gleaming with all a madman's insane fury. "Drink, I tell you."

"I will not, my lord," answered Alma, with flashing eyes. She was aroused now, and forgot her fear. "Are you mad? Have you no thought of pity?"

"Pity for a false wife! Drink!"

"False!" repeated Alma, but not attempting to take the cup. "I have been a true and loyal wife to you, my lord. Heaven will one day judge between us. You never loved me—my money was all my attraction in your eyes, and you have treated me more cruelly than the vilest slave. You have imprisoned me while you ran riot, and now you would poison me in secret that you may make your mistress your wife. But have a care for your own safety; 'murder will out,' remember."

"I will risk that," he hissed in her ear, "and make my vengeance sure. Obey me."

Claudia, who had started indignantly at the word "mistress," made a gesture to Alma to obey him, and drink the draught; but she either did not see, or would not heed, the sign, and spoke again—this time to her.

"So you came to be a spy upon me, madam, instead of a friend. You help my husband to do this wicked deed, and think to fill my place. Maybe you brought him the poison to kill me with?"

"No, no!"

The denial burst from Claudia's lips involuntarily.

"Pshaw!" said Lord Nortonshall, impatiently. "Are you going to drink this peaceably, or shall I have to force you?"

Alma paused for a moment, and then, summoning all her courage, turned to her husband.

"Lord Nortonshall, I will not drink that coffee," she said, with dignity. "If you fancy I have wronged you, prove it in the proper time and place; but I will not be murdered in secret, for you to pretend sorrow over me, and put an unworthy woman in my place."

"Very well," he retorted, furiously; "since you choose some other way, so be it."

He rushed out of the room, and Claudia started hurriedly up.

"Drink it," she said, eagerly, "or he will murder you. I swear there is nothing in it that will harm you. It is but a narcotic, and I will save you."

Alma looked doubtfully at her.

"How can I trust you?" she said.

"You may. I swore to the man you loved so dearly—to Frank Vavasour—that I would save you, by the sacrifice of my own life, if need be, and I will do it, for his sake."

"For his sake?"

"Yes, for I, too, love him."

"You love him?"

"Yes, with a love beyond the knowledge of your cold English nature—with a love that has broken my heart and swallowed up my life, for I am a dying woman. Trust me, and drink."

Alma put out her hand for the cup.

"If you are making a mistake, or worse, deceiving me, and it should be death?" she said, hesitating.

"Have no fear—I am sure," was the answer, though Claudia turned cold and faint as she said it. "Hush! here he comes back."

"Well, have you made up your mind?" he asked, as he came into the room.

"Yes, she will drink it," interrupted Claudia; and then, in a lower tone, she said to him, "You were too violent. I have persuaded her that it is all right."

He made no answer, but handed the cup to his hapless wife, who immediately took and drained it to the bottom.

"May Heaven forgive you," she said, and even as she spoke her eyes fixed, she gave one convulsive gasp, and fell to the floor.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.)

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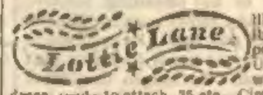

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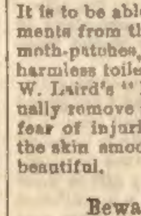

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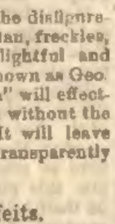

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As a dressing for ladies' hair, the Vigor is prized for its grateful and agreeable perfume, and valued for the soft lustre and richness of tone it imparts.

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SHALL WE KNOW THEM?

BY SADIE BEATTY.

The loved, the early lost, gone on before us
To that fair country where no clouds arise,
Their voices heard no more amid life's chorus,
Their dwelling-place unseen by mortal eyes—

Are they all lost? Is the communion ended
'Twixt kindred hearts that here on earth were wed?
In the bright land where spirit harps are blended,
How shall we know our own peculiar dead?

How shall we know them, where mid light upspringing
Swells the rich chanting of the cherubim,
And the wide bounds of Heaven's dome are ringing
With the glad echo of the seraph's hymn?

How shall we know them? Since the earth's creation,
The mighty hosts of God have multiplied.
In countless throngs the saints of every nation
Sing endless praises to the Lamb who died.

Ah, longings born of tender recollection!
Most glorious will those sinless ones appear;
But through the golden veil of their perfection
Will shine the love that made us happy here.

A father's face! a sister or a brother!
How could they be to loving hearts unknown?
And who could fail to recognize a mother
E'en mid the millions that surround the throne?

Yes, we shall know them, God's great mercy streaming
Meant perfect joy to fill that dwelling-place;
And Heaven would not be Heaven unto our seeming,
Unless we knew each dear familiar face.

Biographical Sketches.

NARCISO LOPEZ.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Narciso Lopez, who made two attempts to deliver the island of Cuba from Spanish rule, was one of the bravest soldiers of modern times. In the mere physical insensibility to danger, which even mercenary soldiers generally possess in a high degree, Lopez was unsurpassed; but in the moral principle—that glorious intention without which true heroism cannot exist—he seems to have been deficient.

Lopez was born in Venezuela. His father possessed vast estates in the *llanos* of South America and numberless herds of wild horses and cattle. Among the herdsmen of the great plains, who almost live on horseback, Narciso had the best teachers in the art of riding. He became an expert horseman, and almost before he had learned to talk he was taught to cling to the mane of an unsaddled horse.

Venezuela was at this time governed by Spain, but while Lopez was still in his teens, the province became the scene of revolution. The inhabitants arose in arms against the government of the mother country. Lopez entered the revolutionary army which was headed by the celebrated General Bolivar. When the royal forces had defeated Bolivar at La Puerta, they besieged Valencia. The citizens, trusting to Bolivar's promises of assistance, defended the place for three weeks, and Lopez fought with desperate valor. The "Liberator" made good his retreat, but did not return to aid the besieged citizens, and the place surrendered. The victorious soldiers poured into the city and indulged in a general massacre.

Lopez managed to escape death at the hands of his enemies, and his filial affection was the means of bringing about that result. Negro slaves were in general exempted from the terrible fate that was meted out to their masters, They were regarded merely as tools used by more skilful men. Knowing this, Lopez joined a large party of negroes. At nightfall, however, he started to search for his father. Stealthily he and his two dark servants traversed the streets. They were not arrested, but they discovered nothing. Filled with anxiety Narciso returned to his hiding-place to find that it had been attacked during his absence. Before him lay eighty-seven murdered men weltering in their blood. He had providentially escaped a like fate. His father had not suffered in the massacre, but his whole fortune had been lost during the convulsions. He was now a ruined man, and his son was no longer heir to the immense *llanos*, with their flocks and herds.

The conduct of General Bolivar in not coming to the relief of Valencia excited great indignation among the inhabitants of that city. Lopez was so deeply enraged by the apparent treachery of the Liberator that he determined to transfer his services to the opposing side. Accordingly he entered the army of General Morales as a common soldier. The real principles that underlay the conflict between the royal and revolutionary forces could have had but little weight with him, when he could fight with equal ardor for either side.

In the royal army his rise was rapid. Some of his exploits read like those of a hero of romance. He was recklessly daring; no peril daunted him, adventure was to him the very breath of life. At the age of twenty-three, he was a colonel in the Spanish service, and he deserved his rapid promotion—a remark that cannot be made of all colonels—if gallantry ever deserved reward.

On one occasion, at the head of a small body of cavalry, thirty-eight in number, he ventured to harass the rear of the retreating troops of Paez. He had proceeded some distance from the main body of the royal army, when the rebel general, heading a band of three hundred picked men, charged him. With lightning-like swiftness, Lopez calculated his chances. He ordered his soldiers to dismount, formed them into a compact square, with their lances pointed outward. In this position they kept the enemy at bay until assistance arrived.

Colonel Lopez received the cross of the order of St. Fernando, of the most illustrious degree, "an honor so rarely bestowed," says a writer on this subject, "that in the whole army there was but one soldier who possessed it beside himself. This reward is not bestowed at the pleasure of the sovereign, but is adjudged by a tribunal, to whom the claim is referred, and by whom counsel and witnesses are heard on either side, every one being at liberty to interpose an objection."

When, in 1823, the royal army evacuated the capital of Venezuela, the revolutionists offered Lopez the post he had held in the retiring army. He refused the proffer, and went to Cuba.

His love of adventure next carried him to South America again. This time it was to explore a wild part of the country. The expedition was not the less agreeable to Lopez as the way was beset by hostile Indians, and some hard fighting was necessary; but, brave as he was, he could not fight thirst. No water was to be found, and the whole party were perishing for want of it, when about sunset an Indian warrior, mounted on a light-colored steed, with black feet and mane, appeared riding toward them. They made known their suffering state to the new-comer. He understood their pantomimic signs, and intimated that he would lead them to a spring. The whites hesitated. Was the red-skin a treacherous enemy who would lead them unawares into the midst of some of his warlike countrymen? They could not answer the question. Lopez offered to risk his life, in order to test the faith of the guide. He dauntlessly mounted behind the Indian, and rode away. His companions remained on the spot, but with faint hopes of his return. The Indian was true to his promise, and Lopez was enabled to lead his companions to a place where water abounded.

He married in Cuba, but returning to Spain served with distinction in the Spanish army. During the administration of General Valdez as governor of Cuba, Lopez held several important offices, but when that governor was deposed, he became dissatisfied with the manner in which Spain ruled the island. He formed plans for making Cuba independent, and these being discovered by the authorities, he fled to the United States. He was not disheartened, however. He organized an expedition for the invasion of Cuba. Commanding six hundred and nine men, he landed at Cardenas. Although at first successful, he was compelled to retreat to the United States.

During the summer of 1851, General Lopez undertook another expedition against the Spanish forces in Cuba. He sailed from New Orleans in the steamer Pampero. President Fillmore issued a proclamation warning Americans that by taking part in this expedition, they violated the laws of neutrality, and by so doing, would place themselves beyond the protection of the United States. With less than five hundred men, Lopez landed at Morilla, on the 11th of August. Instead of assisting the invaders, the Cubans fled before them. Death and desertion thinned the small band that followed the rash but gallant chief. Taking refuge in a farm-house, he fell asleep, worn out by fatigue and suffering. While asleep, he was captured, taken to Havana, and executed as a traitor. The Americans who survived, were kept in prison for some time, but they were finally allowed to return home.

SELF-FOILED.

BY ANNIE H. JEROME.

"There he goes again!" thought old Madame Rochelle, gazing fretfully after her handsome young nephew as he crossed the porch of the pretty rose-embowered cottage opposite her own imposing residence. "What evil genius brought that Kate Thalyo to her sister's just at the time that Maurice came here, nobody knows, unless, indeed, Mrs. Thalyo herself. I daresay she thought Maurice would be a fine catch for her husband's poor sister, Ha, not at home, eh! Gone up to Sunset Hill, of course," her thought went on, as the young man turned from the door and hastily made his way to the street again. "And there he goes after her, the love-sick ninny! I verily belive the minx steals off to that hill just to entice him. Well, well, Miss Kate, we'll be even yet! It's a long lane that has no turning."

And madame's eyes dropped abstractedly to the floor as her offending relative vanished around the street corner. Minute after minute she sat there, an expression on her face which was never found on that of a good woman. At length she arose with a satisfied smile, and despite her sixty odd years quickly ascended the stairs to a back chamber whose windows overlooked a fine expanse of country.

"Yes, yes, well enough to see what they are about up there," she muttered, taking a small spy-glass from the closet and adjusting it with a vicious jerk. "Humph, just got there! shaking down the scarlet maple leaves to announce himself. Well, she does look pretty, for all, under the purple sunset glow and that flame-like shower. And how the delight beams through her surprise! But riches should mate with riches, and she's as poor as a church mouse."

And this reflection effaced the softer expression from madame's lips and set them in their former cruel rigidity. Long and patiently she watched the two, vexed comments and bitter ejaculations mingling ominously together, and when they finally left the shadow of the old maple she put away the glass with a few quick nods that betokened no good to Kate Thalyo. A little later she was making a careful tour of her beautiful front grounds. In due time her patience was rewarded. The two for whom she watched came slowly down the street, and as good fortune had it, on madame's side, and the suave old lady courteously greeting Miss Thalyo was quite another from the patient spy of the previous hour.

"I beg you to come in, my dear," she cried, throwing open the gate and seizing Kate's hand, "and while Maurice goes to the post office for me I will show you how defiant my summer flowers have been of fall winds."

Maurice looked surprised.

"How is it that Alick did not go?" he asked. "Is he sick?"

"No; but he seemed so tired that I forbade his going, knowing that I could send you."

"My Aunt Rochelle has suddenly become very considerate," thought Maurice as he excused himself to Kate and hurried away. "Alick was all right two hours ago."

It was but a stone's throw to the office, and madame took prompt advantage of Kate's first remark as they turned from the gate.

"Yes, my dear," she answered brightly, "it is a charming place, and I am proud of it. But I assure you I shall be doubly so when Maurice's lovely bride is installed here as mistress. I long since promised him this place should be my gift to them on their bridal day. She is a magnificent creature, Miss Thalyo, and Maurice says the loveliest on the face of the earth—or has he made you the confidant of his rapturous admiration of Marie?"

"No, madame," answered Kate a little faintly as she bent over the fragrant bloom of a night-scented jasmine.

"He has not? Well, I am surprised, I admit, for I know he places you far above the scores of beauties with whom, I regret to say, he flirts most outrageously. But, dear me, how ghastly pale you are, Miss Thalyo!" she abruptly cried as Kate reluctantly turned from the friendly jasmine. "You should not inhale that heavy perfume; it is very injurious to persons of your fine organization. Here, my dear, let me give you a bit of the more delicate heliotrope."

And madame stooped and culled with elaborate care a rich purple bloom, resuming, as she placed it in Kate's hand—

"I was about to say that I often tell Maurice he should, under the circumstances, be more careful in his deportment toward the ladies; but, dear fellow, he whispers soft nothings and looks unutterable things without a thought beyond the delight of the moment. So he only laughs at my counsel, and tells me Marie don't object, and that he is sowing his last wild oats. But here he is, and furious he'd be if he knew I'd been telling tales. So you must be—"

"Telling tales," laughingly echoed Maurice Arnot as he joined them. "If they are pleasant ones, I'd like to be a listener, too, Aunt Rochelle. Did you find them entertaining, Miss Thalyo?" he asked, his love-soft eyes trying to scan her face in the deepening twilight.

"Undoubtedly," she answered, lightly and pleasantly, "since Madame Rochelle was the narrator."

"Thank you, Miss Thalyo," bowed madame sweetly, and then, more to change the subject than anything else, said, turning to Maurice, "I see you have letters. Are there any for me?"

"Three for you, as many for me, and one for Miss Thalyo."

"We will go into the house, then," returned madame. "I shall not depend upon your eyesight in this failing light."

Once in the house, Kate gracefully yielded to madame's pressing invitation and remained. And so finely did she deport herself, that before the evening was half over, madame was questioning within her own bosom whether after all the lips and cheeks had not whitened under the jasmine's perfume.

"But it don't matter," she thought, as at a later hour Kate bade her a gay good-night, "Maurice is safe. She's sure to give him the cold shoulder let him make love ever so finely. I must, however, send her a little note to-morrow when he is out of the way, and enjoin the strictest secrecy. It is barely possible she did not understand I was about to do so when he interrupted me."

But the current of madame's thought was speedily changed. On returning to the drawing-room and opening the neglected letters, she found that business of vital importance to her monied interests would necessitate her leaving home for a distant city in the course of the next forty-eight hours.

"I can't possibly get off to-morrow," she decided, after a minute's anxious reflection. "So it must be left till the day after."

Meantime, Maurice Arnot stood on the cottage porch wishing a good-night to Kate Thalyo, who still made a show of sparkling spirits.

"You are perfectly brilliant to-night, Miss Thalyo," he murmured, gazing half-tenderly, half-reverently at the face which was, indeed, exquisitely beautiful under the soft moonlight. Then, with a sudden, passionate impulse, he caught her hand, exclaiming, "Love me, Kate! love me! and so transform this hard world into a paradise! I have sometimes dared to hope you could and would. Will you Kate?—beautiful Kate!"

With a proud gesture, Kate withdrew her hand and stepped back, replying in haughtily emphatic tones to his concluding words:

"You have! Then learn from my own lips that you are vastly mistaken! I never will!" adding, with a little gay laugh which grated harshly on his ear, "we must be friends though, Mr. Arnot. A flirtation so delightfully pleasant should not end in open rupture. I therefore proffer my forgiveness for your presumption in hoping so wild a thing. You are a man; and men are innately vain, and consequently excusable. Shall we be friends, Mr. Arnot?"

And she extended a little, ice-cold hand. He barely touched it, replying coldly, as he lifted his hat—

"Just as you please, Miss Thalyo. Good-evening."

The next minute he was striding across madame's grand hall. At the foot of the stairs madame's voice arrested him.

"Maurice, come here. I wish to see you before you retire," she quavered from the drawing-room door.

He turned quickly, anxiously inquiring as he hastened toward her—

"Are you ill, Aunt Rochelle?"

"No, no," she returned, more naturally, "not ill, but troubled." And too much absorbed in her own cares to observe his pale face, she continued—"I have bad news here from Lansing, very bad."

And as they seated themselves, she gave him the letter, still open in her hand.

"It is bad enough, indeed," he presently remarked, as he thoughtfully re-folded the sheet. "You will go to-morrow, of course?"

"It is impossible. Williams comes to-morrow about that—"

"Pardon me, Aunt Rochelle. Never mind Williams. I will attend to your interests here. It is true Lansing says the day after to-morrow will do; but it is quite evident that he is anxious for your immediate presence. Go, then, without delay."

"But that will leave me without your escort," Madame complained. "Nevertheless, I see you are right. I will go," she directly added.

So madame started on her journey utterly forgetful, in her overwhelming anxiety for the thousands at stake, that the intended note to Kate Thalyo remained unpenned.

Nor did her mind revert to it till the weight of anxiety oppressing her had been relieved by an interview with Lansing. Under the rebound lesser cares presented themselves.

"It is really quite unnecessary to write," she thought; "but I will nevertheless do so to-day, and thus make all safe beyond the shadow of a doubt. I can't possibly leave here in less than a week, and it would be awkward for me if she should happen to tax Maurice with this engagement of my fanciful creation."

Accordingly the note was written; and also a lengthy epistle to her nephew, detailing minutely the important points of the business claiming her attention. They were sealed and posted in time for the night mail—and duly received the following morning.

Maurice, seated before the library table, opened his with eager interest. But he was soon intensely mystified.

"I know, my dear," commenced madame, "that you are to be trusted, else I would not have committed what I did to your keeping. So you must not construe this into an expression of doubt on my part. The truth is, I have been a little fearful that you failed to gather from my last hasty words, that I was about to place a seal upon your lips in regard to the subject which had just engaged us. I therefore conclude to write and impress it upon you, that the conversation was strictly confidential, and on no account to be repeated till the matter becomes public."

"The deuce!" muttered Maurice Arnot, "does my good Aunt Rochelle think I have taken leave of my senses? The idea that I would bruit her business abroad! Trouble must have turned her brain," he thought again, as he went on reading.

"And now let me assure you, my dear," continued madame, "that I consider you the very soul of honor, and know that I have only to express my wish to have it most carefully observed. The secret which I confided to you about my nephew is known only to a few inti—"

"Her nephew! The secret!" exclaimed Maurice in angry surprise. "To whom can she be writing?" And he hastily turned to another page. "Miss Kate Thalyo! By all—"

The sentence remained unfinished. Starting from his chair with a force that sent it whirling to the floor, he dashed out of the house and across the street to the cottage.

"Miss Kate's down in the summer-house, sir," replied the servant to his impetuous inquiry, adding to herself as Maurice strode through the hall and on to the indicated spot, "Bless me! he looks mad enough to eat her! Whatever has Miss Kate been a-doing, I wonder? Something, I know, fur he haven't been here fur an age or more, and afore this he as good as lived here. Thank fortin' I ain't no lover of nobody's. They're allers a-b'ilin' in hot water."

Maurice, quite unconscious of his looks and Betty's criticisms, dashed on and into Kate's presence.

"I have a letter here, Miss Thalyo, which needs some explanation," he exclaimed, throwing himself into a seat opposite the one from which Kate had nervously started. "It is from my aunt, and though directed to me, was meant for you, I found, after possessing myself of a portion of its mystifying contents. Will you be good enough to enlighten me as to its meaning?"

"Perhaps," smiled Kate from the seat she had resumed, "this may prove a key," handing him a letter addressed to Miss Kate Thalyo. "I was just on the point of sending Betty over with it. I am quite unacquainted with its contents, for on reading 'My dear nephew,' I turned at once to the signature, which proved to be Madame Rochelle's."

Maurice took the letter; but without a glance at it, continued sternly—

"Miss Thalyo, what secret has my Aunt Rochelle confided to you? It is my right to ask, and my right to be answered, since it appears from this precious epistle that it concerns me above all others."

A crimson flush dyed Kate's pale face as she said gravely—

"It would, perhaps, be well for me to see the letter in question before replying."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Thalyo," he returned, hastily placing it in her hand. "I hope the natural excitement of my feelings will excuse me in your eyes. I actually forgot the letter belonged to you."

Kate glanced rapidly over the sheet, and then refolded it in grave silence.

"Well, Miss Thalyo?" said Maurice, impatiently, finding she did not speak.

A still deeper red burned on Kate's cheek as she replied, slowly—

"You should certainly be able to conjecture, Mr. Arnot, what madame would be likely to confide as a secret."

"I certainly am not," he returned, controlling his angry excitement with an effort. "I have nothing to be ashamed of, and may, therefore, positively declare that I have no secrets. But you will do me the greatest kindness if you will explain at once. Again I ask Miss Thalyo what is the secret? Am I dishonored by the story you have heard?"

"People might differ on that point, Mr. Arnot," Kate coldly answered. "A female coquette is a contemptible creature in my eyes, but a so-called man who stoops thus is beneath even contempt, I think."

Arnot's eyes blazed. "A coquette! What has that to do with me, Miss Thalyo? My aunt surely never reported so great a falsity to you?"

Kate remaining silent; he said, hotly—

"Miss Thalyo, will you show me a little mercy, and end this by a frank statement, or must I force it all from my aunt? What have you heard derogatory to my character as a gentleman?

Kate paling and flushing alternately, at last answered somewhat falteringly—

"I have only heard the story of your engagement, Mr. Arnot."

"What engagement?" he asked, in amazement. "I don't understand."

"Marie—the lady to whom you are engaged," she replied, still more falteringly.

"Marie! when did you hear all this?" he asked, calmly and gravely.

"The evening that I spent with madame," answered Kate again, looking much like a prisoner at the bar.

He gazed silently at her downcast face a moment, and then wheeled around and stood in the doorway of the summer-house for what seemed an age to Kate. Presently he came back to her.

"And you believed her, Kate?" he said, reproachfully. "You believed her after all my silent worship of yourself? Kate, Kate! no one could have made me doubt you!"

"Could I doubt your own aunt?" murmured Kate.

"But you could doubt me! Now listen, Kate. Marie is a creature of my aunt's imagination—all that she has told you is a fiction. I love you, and you only. Will you be my wife, Kate?

Kate's answer must have been favorable, for madame received by the next mail a letter from Maurice Arnot which contained the following—

"Your letters were duly received by Kate and me, and the necessary exchange duly made. Believe me, my dear Aunt Rochelle, that we both thank you warmly for so promptly undoing what was so unwisely done. Kate and I are very happy and ask your blessing upon our engagement."

The sheet dropped from madame's hands. "Letters exchanged! what have I done! what have I done!" she exclaimed in utter astonishment and shame.

But she took good care never to ask either Maurice or Kate, and deciding to make the best of a disagreeable event, she called on Kate the next week with a bland innocence truly edifying to the lovers.

CONSOLATION.

HOUSEMAID.—"I'm sorry to hear you've lost your uncle, Mary."

MARY.—"Yes, it was quite sudden. But—ain't it a real comfort as I got that black dress, instead of the green one you wanted me to buy?"

A FRIGHTENED "GHOST."

BY MARK EDWARDS.

"Where is Lucy, Rob?" asked Ida Leland of her younger brother.

"Don't know," responded he, briefly.

"Well, *I* know," she said; "she's out near Cemetery Hill with Ellis Lee. I only wanted to be sure of it."

And Ida, with a merry, mischievous toss of her girlish head, was off.

"I wonder what she's up to?" queried Rob, as he watched her hasten toward the house in the soft summer twilight, entering by the back way.

Ida, as she left him, chuckled mischievously to herself, "Won't I give them a good scare—Lu and that dandy, Ellis Lee? I know he's a dreadful coward. Oh, what fun to see him run—or faint, maybe!"

Ida dearly loved a joke—practical jokes, even, when they were not at her own expense.

She darted into the house, flitted upstairs to her chamber, jerked a sheet from the bed, folded it into a small compass, hid it under her apron, and then glided by a round-about way to that favorite trysting spot of Greenwood lovers, the road that ran by beautiful Cemetery Hill.

She thought it would be capital fun to appear suddenly as a supernatural being to her sister and Ellis Lee, and see the effect she imagined it would produce upon them both. Against the young man she had a slight grudge, and she determined to pay him off. She was sure he was a coward, and wanted him to prove it himself such.

Gaining the road by a by-path, the foolish girl threw the sheet over her head—having descried, as she supposed, the forms of the lovers near the summit of the hill—and advanced in the most spectral fashion up the elevation. But she had been mistaken in her supposition that she had seen, through the gathering gloom, the figures of Lucy and Ellis. The trunks of two roadside trees would not resolve themselves into the lover-pair she sought.

Ida paused a moment, quite disappointed at not finding them, and feeling a little lonely and awed in her white habiliments.

She glanced over the cemetery fence; there stood the tombstones, cold and white. For the first time a sense of the foolishness of her attempted joke struck her, and her really brave little heart fluttered with reproving fear.

"It is wicked to be doing this," she said to herself in a guilty whisper. "I—I just thought to have a little fun, but I know it is not right. I will go on over the hill toward home."

She had not reached the summit, and consequently could not see the other side; but she heard a noise that alarmed her.

First, a dismal stir of the night wind, and then a fierce, frightened breath and a rush of heavy footsteps, as if some monster were rapidly approaching. She looked up in terror. A wild shriek burst from her lips, for coming savagely toward her was a huge white creature of such terrible shape as earthly being—brute or human—surely never wore.

A monstrous and shapeless head, that seemed to toss about limp and lifeless; a bellowing body of formidable size; fierce-flying limbs, and a tail erect and lashing furiously—these were what she saw, and, with a second shuddering cry of terror and repulsion, poor Ida fainted quite away.

She lay there on the dampened sod, the sheet still around her, and her pallid face touching the dusty earth. The monster had not attacked her, though apparently charging full upon her, but had passed on down the hill.

No one came to Ida's assistance immediately; she lay there some minutes in that death-like swoon before help reached her. Voices, at first laughing, but suddenly taking a serious tone as her prostrate form was discovered, were heard just as she began to revive.

The good Samaritans—her own brother, sister and Ellis Lee—bore her quickly home, without questioning, but with many exclamations and excited remarks among themselves that Ida could not, of course, just then understand.

When she was in a condition to hear and give explanations, she began with a confession of her folly.

"But the monster?" she asked shudderingly very soon, fancying she saw her listeners smile a little. "What was it?"

"Our tame white steer, Ida," said Rob, guiltily and laughingly too; "I frightened him by throwing a white sack over his horns, and he tore down the road like mad. I thought I would play ghost too."

But from that time forth neither he nor his sister played ghost again.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In these cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

WE cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

"BIVALVE," (Exeter,) asks: "Is there really such an article of commerce and food as *dried* oysters? I don't mean *fried* oysters." We are happy to inform you there is. Dried oysters are imported into San Francisco, chiefly from China, though a few come from Mexico. They are taken from the shell and dried in the sun, without the use of any salt or chemical preparation, and imported in wooden boxes containing one hundred pounds each. They are consumed mostly by the Chinese residents on the Pacific coast.

"EXTRA" writes: "Please let me know for what I could obtain a good, large and comprehensive work on mythology." The book would cost you from $3 to $5, according to style of binding.

W. E., (Quincy, Ill.,) asks: "1st. What would it cost me to secure a copyright on a small book or on a printed game? 2d. Would it be necessary to employ a lawyer, or could I do the business myself? 3d. How often would a copyright have to be renewed? 4th. What is Josh Billings's real name? Please give me his address. 5th. Are his funny sayings copyrighted? If so, could I use them in any work of mine (for sale) by giving him credit for the production of said quotations. 6th. I suppose I must finish like the rest do, by asking what you think of my writing?" 1st. A printed copy of the title of the work must be sent to the Librarian of Congress at Washington, for which a fee of fifty cents is paid, and fifty cents for a certified copy of the filing. Within ten days after publication, two copies must be sent to the Librarian of Congress at Washington. 2d. A lawyer's services would not be necessary. 3d. The law gives to an author the exclusive right of publishing for twenty-eight years, and the right of renewal to himself, his wife or children, resident in the United States, for fourteen years more, making forty-two years in all. 4th. The real name of Josh Billings is H. W. Shaw. 5th. They are copyrighted. You could not use them without the holder's consent. 6th. Your handwriting is careless, though not a bad hand. The remedy is obvious.

WILD BILL, (Worthington, Noble Co., Minnesota,) writes: "You advertise to make no distinction with your yearly subscribers whether single or in clubs—yet you charge for single subscribers three dollars, or in club of four only two dollars each. I supposed a single subscriber got it for two dollars, with the Chromo. I will try and get a club here. I have taken your paper four years, and want it forty more." We mean, of course, that as relates to the premium picture, we make no distinction between our *yearly* subscribers; each receives a copy. We offer the paper lower to subscribers in clubs, because we wish to make it an object for our friends to raise clubs, and thus increase the size of our list. We could easier furnish the paper to a very large list at $2.00, than to a small one at $3.00.

LOVER LEAR, (Atlanta.) If the girl who you say "thinks a heap" of you, is at the same time willing to marry another because he has more money than you, we advise you to cheerfully give her up. If you cannot win her on your merits as a man, you ought not to care to win her at all.

VIVIEN, (Galesburgh, Ill.,) asks: "1st. What costume should a lady wear who is to represent an Italian girl in a tableau? 2d. What woman talked down the fifty wisest men? It is referred to in Tennyson's poem of the Princess. 3d. In which of Tennyson's poems do the following lines occur:

'And the dead,
Steered by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter . . . . . .
. . . . For she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.'"

1st. The character of peasant is the one usually personated when one appears at a masquerade as an Italian girl. Any style of short dress, with basque and overskirt and a jaunty hat would answer for the occasion, if they were of bright colors and trimmed somewhat fancifully. Artistical correctness is not much regarded, unless the affair is a very elaborate one indeed. 2d. We cannot inform you. 3d. In Elaine, one of the Idyls of the King.

ZIP, (Talbotton, Georgia,) writes: "You will greatly oblige me by answering the following questions: 1st. Which is the largest brood of chickens in the world, and where can they be found? 2d. Who was the author of the book entitled, 'The Young Islanders?' 3d. Will cutting off a dog's tail cure him of the mange? 4th. What will make the hair come back on a bald head? 5th. What remedy do you recommend for a lazy boy?" 1st. The Shanghai. They are no longer a favorite bird, and we cannot tell you where they can be found. Of any chicken fancier, we suppose. 2d. Rev. Elijah Kellogg. 3d. Yes. Cut off the tail just behind the ears of the dog. 4th. Nothing, if the roots are destroyed; nature, more than anything else, if they are not—though sometimes stimulants, applied outwardly, may do good. Keep the head clean with tepid water, and brush it frequently. 5th. Work.

A. Z. S., (Chester, Pa.,) writes: "Seeing how accommodating you are in giving advice to those who seek it, I have been tempted to ask a favor of you also. Before leaving home I went to see a young lady whom I love very much, and who loves me. When I was about to depart, I asked her to kiss me, to which she objected, saying she did not think it was right for a young man to kiss a young lady, unless he was a relative. I hold it is right, provided she is willing. We have concluded to let you settle the case for us. What do you think of my handwriting? Please answer the above, and you will oblige one who is very anxious for the answer." We infer from what you say that you are engaged to the young lady, and we see no reason you should not kiss her when taking your leave, if both of you keep your teeth clean, and neither has recently been eating fish or onions. Even in this latter case, however, it is very much a matter of taste. Your handwriting is not good, though it is plain. You space your words too much.

LEONORA, (Griffin, Ga.,) asks: "1st. What, as a birthday present, would it be nice to give one's parents? 2d. What is the meaning of Hallowe'en? 3d. What is the meaning of Thanksgiving Day, and why do not all people keep it? 4th. Are many Indians on the plains now? 5th. Is Andalusia a country of Spain? 6th. Is it right to kiss a young gentleman to whom you are engaged? 7th. Would you advise any one to undertake the arduous and laborious life of an authoress? 8th. What do you think of my handwriting? Every one says I write like a man. My age is 18. 9th. What are the seven wonders of the world?" 1st. Any tasteful little article; if your own work, so much the better. 2d. Hallowe'en, according to Scotch superstition, is the time when witches, fairies, elves and other imps of earth and air hold annual holiday. 3d. The meaning of Thanksgiving is evident from the word itself. It is an occasion when national and public acknowledgement is made for the blessings of the year. Some do not observe it because they are too careless, too busy, or have no sympathy with that particular form of recognizing the indebtedness of man to his Maker for the good things of life. 4th. They still number several hundred thousand in the whole country. 5th. It is a province of Spain. 6th. See answer to A. Z. S., just above. 7th. We would not; not because it is "hard and laborious," but because the chances of success in that direction are so few, unless the person is exceptionally well qualified. 8th. It is poor, but you are young enough to improve it. It certainly does look more like a man's than that of a miss. 9th. We lately answered that question in the Post. (See No. 17.)

BENEDICT, (Waverly, N. Y.,) asks: "Can you inform me who wrote the lines—

'One must eat in matrimony,
And love is neither bread nor honey?'"

N. P. Willis wrote them, but many a man has found out the truth of them for himself.

WILLIAM TELL, (Wilkesbarre, Pa.,) asks: "1st. Where was the Indian grasshopper war fought? While in the Tuscarora Valley, Juniata County, this State, I was shown the battle-field, and the legend was told me over and again; but since then have seen in a history of Wyoming Valley that the Shawnee Flats in that valley was the scene of the war. 2d. Can you tell me where I can find a selection from William Tell beginning—

'Place there the boy, the tyrant said,
Fix me an apple on his head;
Ha! rebel, now there's a fair mark for your skill
To yonder shining apple wait an arrow;
Bold Tell looked there, his cheeks grew pale;
His proud lips throbbed as if 'twould fail
His laboring breath,' &c.

And it goes on describing the cleaving of the apple, when Gessler discovered another arrow in Tell's belt and said—

'Another arrow in thy belt is placed.
What means it, speak?
. . . . . .
To smite thee, tyrant, to the heart,
If Heaven had willed it that my dart
Should kill this boy.'

If you could publish the whole of it, or tell me where I could find it I would be very grateful. 3d. Finally, not to be odd, what do you think of my handwriting?" 1st. We cannot decide the question for you. 2d. There is a dramatic poem on this subject, written by J. Sheridan Knowles, but you misquote if you give the above passage as from it. The poem or play to which we refer is very fine. We cannot publish it, as it is of considerable length. You will find it in any edition of the works of Knowles. 3d. It is very good; a singular hand also.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]